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HITLER'S PINCERS

BECAUSE the actual fighting is not so near to England as it was a year ago, the public is not yet fully aware how serious our situation is. The outline of Hitler's plans for 1941 are now fairly clear. Last spring he struck down Norway, occupied Denmark, overwhelmed Holland, trapped the British army in Belgium and proceeded to the destruction of France. This year, after gaining military and political control of Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary, he has repeated the tactics of driving a wedge between Jugoslavia and Greece (like his last year's victims these countries had had no adequate Staff conversations), thrown Jugoslavia into confusion and now turned upon the combined Greek, British and Dominion forces which hold the mountainous country across the north of Greece. We must recognise that the odds are against them; it is obvious that however well they fight Hitler has the advantage in being able to pour a vast amount of material into the fight, whereas geography limits our possible reinforcements. This Balkan attack is the northern end of Hitler's pincers.

In Africa Hitler has once more succeeded in bringing off a surprise. That the Germans were infiltrating into North Africa was well known; that it was possible for them to land at least three divisions, two of them fully mechanised, no one had thought. A large number of troops and considerable quantities of oil can now be brought by air transport; it seems also likely that the naval battle with Italy was planned to draw off the British navy while ships crossed from Italian and perhaps French ports. That some of the ships carrying heavy tanks and other mechanised transport came through French territorial waters, perhaps even in French merchant ships, is also considered likely. In any case this movement was so timed that it came upon the skeleton army which General Wavell had left in North Africa exactly at the moment that the German attack developed in the Balkans. It has covered the ground of General Wavell's victories at an even greater pace than the British mechanised forces. The British are holding out at Tobruk in the rear of the German advance columns, and the British navy has again proved its command of the sea by sinking an enemy convoy off Libya. The battle is already engaged in Egypt, which Mr. Churchill was rash enough to believe until a few weeks ago had been made safe for the duration of the war. How serious the battle for Egypt is now likely to be Mr. Churchill suggested in his recent statement to the House of Commons. Thus the second claw of the pincers, which the British believed they had brought under their own control, has also been seized by Hitler's forces. Meanwhile, again, with that nice attention to timing which distinguishes the work of the German General Staff, the pro-Nazi coup has been carried out in Iraq, and it may be difficult for the British to prevent the aerodromes of that country being used by the *Luftwaffe* at a critical moment. Now that the plan of campaign is revealed, it is clear that Hitler's next objective is to complete his mastery of the Balkans and to turn Britain out of Egypt and the Middle East and accomplish the old German dream of mastery from Berlin to Baghdad.

Was it after all a mistake to herald Jugoslavia's decision to resist as "great news"? Its immediate results have been the devastation of the open city of Belgrade, and most of Jugoslavia has already been overrun. For ourselves, we were glad when the Jugoslavs determined to fight, not because we view with anything but horror the spectacle of another civil population and another brave but inadequately equipped army acting as targets for Hitler's mechanised troops, but because there seemed reason to hope that the mountains of Jugoslavia might become a permanent centre of resistance and that the resistance of one Slav people might have far-reaching effects on neighbouring countries, including Russia. It seemed, too, impossible that Turkey should stand waiting to be attacked until Germany had dealt separately with Jugoslavia and Greece. Jugoslavia's fate illustrates once more a fact that we should all have realised by now—that, apart from the comparatively small mechanised force supporting the Greeks, there is to-day only one army that counts in Europe: the size of armies, the traditional courage of small nations—these factors cannot be effective where tanks, aeroplanes and technical skill are inadequate. The press of Ankara is very forthright and administers verbal rebuffs to the Nazis

of a stronger character than those that are coming from Moscow. But there is at present no sign that Turkey intends to do more than attempt to defend her own soil, and we have heard too many Foreign Offices declaring an unchangeable determination to defend their neutrality and to fight if attacked, without helping their neighbours who were attacked, to feel much optimism about Turkey in the future. Istanbul, as the Turks well know, would burn even more rapidly than Belgrade, and the coup in Iraq suggests dangerous possibilities of German attack from the rear. Russia's rebuke to Hungary drew attention to the peculiar meanness of the Hungarian attack on Jugoslavia, the disgrace of which was already sufficiently underlined by Count Teleki's suicide. Russia continues to try to save her face in the Near East by offers of friendship and diplomatic retorts to Germany, and Mr. Matsuoka's success in obtaining a pact with Russia is probably due to Stalin's desire to safeguard his eastern frontier in case of a German attack in the Ukraine. Stalin's natural desire to keep out of the war is the clue to Russian policy; the question is whether his efforts of appeasement can be more successful than those of Mr. Neville Chamberlain. Stalin's agreement with Hitler in 1939 was the Eastern counterpart of the Munich pact. Since then he has continued, as British policy continued, to attempt to hold Germany off his frontiers at other people's expense. Mr. Churchill may well have been on the right track when he warned Stalin in his speech last week that Hitler's projected drive over the Dardanelles through Turkey to Baghdad may well include in its programme the wheat fields of the Ukraine and the oil of the Caucasus.

No one can prophesy how far Hitler's plans in the Near East will succeed. They are, in any case, well thought out. Even if Hitler is checked in Greece, even if Egypt holds, even if Turkey puts up a strong resistance, the second object of Germany's onslaught remains; a terrible strain is put upon the British Navy, which is now compelled to perform the functions of the allied navies in the latter part of the last war, when the French, American, Japanese and Italian navies were all on the same side. In those days, though the German navy was more formidable, the Air Force was not a menace to ocean traffic. To-day the *Luftwaffe*, even though divided by the Near Eastern campaign, is yet large enough to combine with the U-boat campaign in a ruthless attack on British shipping. The figures in the last weeks have not been reassuring. Clearly the people of this island, whether they are actually invaded or not in the coming months, have before them the greatest possible test of endurance. The swift success in Italian East Africa and in Abyssinia, where Haile Selassie is being reinstated with all the traditional pomp of his empire, is no more than a sideshow in the main conflict; its chief importance is that it should release a powerful and well-trained army to aid in the defence of Egypt. The fall of Massawa means that President Roosevelt is able to claim the Red Sea as a peaceful area and send supplies in American ships. Obviously the main issue of the war now depends on the swiftness with which American supplies can reach this country, the intelligence with which the mobilisation of British resources and man-power can be carried out, and the efficiency with which we are able to cope with the air and submarine offensive against our communications everywhere, and in particular against the shipping on which our survival in England depends.

Economic Reflections (*by a Correspondent*)

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade suggests that small shopkeepers, anticipating their compulsory squeezing out by statutory concentration of distribution and other war measures, should realise their present stocks, invest the money in Government securities and find other jobs for the time being. That is to say they should accept the misfortune of war and fend for themselves. There is no suggestion of compensation or relief of any kind to this class of victim. Now if we all had to take pot-luck in this matter, the principle could be accepted as logical though harsh and bad war economics. But it is patent that the Government does not dare to deal with powerful interests in that way. The coal owners were given power to compensate themselves for war losses by a special levy on the consumer. In many cases where an occupation or profession is rendered superfluous by the war the Government carries the persons concerned on the national pay-roll or connives at arrangements which have the same effect. The Government has become the sole buyer of home cattle but it carries the livestock auctioneers on the price of meat. Recently it was necessary for the Government to become the sole importer and distributor of cotton, and as a result the Liverpool and the Manchester Cotton Associations have ceased to function for the rest of the war. But the State is to pay the Associations £500,000 per annum, and one suspects that this is not the value of any continuing services which they can render but generous compensation for the displaced members. We should like some information on this point since the Ministers concerned are very taciturn on the subject. Another example of possible discrimination comes to mind. What is the position of the tenants of bombed premises *vis-à-vis* the ground landlord? Are they still liable for the ground rent? We ask because the Commissioners of Crown Lands have already dealt with 150 applications from tenants of Crown property and in 63 cases they have either reduced or cancelled the ground rent or allowed arrears to be paid in instalments. Now most of these tenants are people of influence. The Regent Street traders are an example, and it looks as if the Government has hastened to give relief to its own tenants (at the taxpayer's expense) before producing any scheme of relief for tenants at large. The whole problem of compensation now tackled piecemeal and on the basis of completely divergent principles must be reconsidered before permanent injury is done to the body economic and politic.

* * *

With the temporary suppression of the shipping loss figures—and that is what is brought about by the change of publishing the statistics from a weekly to a monthly basis—the Admiralty or the Prime Minister, or whoever was responsible for this decision, handed the first round of the Battle of the Atlantic to the enemy. Hitler will not suppress his statistics. He will broadcast them here and in the U.S., and in the absence of any timely statement on our side, he will have a free and happy field for his propaganda. If this was the only consequence of this ill-considered decision it would be disturbing but not in the long run harmful. Propaganda, as our Ministers ought to know from the consequences of their forecasts about the impending breakdown of the Nazi military machine for lack of lubricating oil, has a knack of defeating itself. The figures for shipping losses are inadequate as a basis for judging the import position, for they include only the losses of ships actually sunk by enemy action, and they do not take into account the consequences of the slowing down of shipping and unloading. But they were the figures on the basis of which a steady pressure could be brought on Ministers to enforce a full mobilisation of our resources (incidentally they were very useful in speeding the help from America). Now that they are suppressed the Ministers presumably hope to be free from criticism. Did Lord Simon not tell us that our losses of foreign exchange were trivial? Could the critics give an effective reply? It now turns out that we lost over $1,000 million due to the blunders of the Treasury. The present Cabinet is much too intent on the more dramatic aspects of the war. The "sordid" economics are relegated into the background. But when could an army fight without weapons? Until we put our house in order we might hope for miracles but can't face the future with confidence.

* * *

The plans for concentrating industry are slowly—too slowly—maturing. Firms are trying to arrange "private" agreements to pool production. Interminable questionnaires are sent to the Board of Trade and harassed officials are doing the best they can. But plans based on a detached survey of the industries concerned (and what about millinery and shoes, and other essential trades?) exist only in a very few instances. Hence, in spite of the imprecations and assurances of the President of the Board of Trade, the inevitable consequences of treating firms not as parts of an industry, but as individual units are already manifesting themselves. The small units are inevitably at a disadvantage and many instances of amalgamations on onerous terms could be quoted. The Board of Trade may yet be forced to elaborate plans for industries by industries. And perchance we might even get a reasonable scheme of compensation and try to preserve a basis for a sound programme of reconstruction.

After the Budget (*from a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

On the first day of the general Budget debate remarkable maiden speeches were delivered by Dr. Russell Thomas and Sir Peter Bennett. With his long experience of public affairs it was not surprising that Sir Peter Bennett felt himself at home in addressing the House for the first time. But Russell Thomas's speech would have been a remarkable *tour de force* even for a seasoned M.P. In an unusually long speech for a new Member he spoke without a single note, quoting facts and figures freely and betraying a fervour which in these days is not often displayed in the House.

The high level attained by the two new Members was sustained by all who spoke throughout the two days' debate. Every one who spoke had some definite contribution to make. The debate was remarkable too for the way in which with, I think, one exception, Members congratulated the Chancellor upon his realism and upon the heavy but necessary burden his Budget imposed upon the community.

It is regrettable that these debates could not be more fully reported in the press. Full reports would have shown the country the House of Commons functioning at its best.

Graham White, early in the debate, uttered a word of warning regarding the refund to be made to taxpayers after the war. "Those familiar with the history of the veterans' war bonus in America will realise how undesirable it is to make the distribution of a capital sum subject to electoral competition." He and Lipson appealed for family allowances as the essential counterpart to increased taxation and rationing.

Hely-Hutchinson, in a wryly humorous speech, and Irving Albery showed how unjust taxation is as a means of attaining the Chancellor's main objective, which is reduced consumption. Curiously enough, neither advocated the logical means of attaining the Chancellor's end by complete rationing of all necessities of civilian consumption.

Crookshank, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, in replying to the first day's debate, took up a perplexing attitude. He justified the methods of the War Savings Movement on the grounds "that there is a great need for reduction still in consumption and in personal expenditure is quite clear. If one can trust one's own eyes there is a great deal of money still being spent which in war time may not all be justified." He instanced the increase in the number of private cars licensed in the last quarter of 1940-41 as compared with the previous year and the probability that an increase in the consumption of beer and tobacco will be disclosed. This statement suggests that even now the Government is not clear about war economics and the dangers of inequalities of sacrifice. If too much beer, tobacco and petrol are really being consumed, the Government should ration output to the figure they think desirable.

On the second day both Loftus and Lipson questioned whether our war effort, as estimated by the Chancellor, was adequate in the light of the substantial increase which has again taken place in German war expenditure. Is the Government provision of war materials calculated without reference to the size of the enemy's exertions?

Running through the debate was an undercurrent of criticism of what Benson termed "the ballyhoo" of war weapons weeks. There was also considerable uneasiness on the score of what the banks are making out of their participation in financing the war. Disquiet was also expressed at the lack of a clear-cut wages policy to tie up with the proposed stabilisation of the cost of living by means of subsidies for goods and services which affect the cost of living index.

The outstanding Parliamentary event of the week was the Prime Minister's statement on the progress of the war, in the course of which he proposed a resolution thanking the Forces for their victories in the Middle East. The House awaited the Prime Minister's statement with the uneasy knowledge that unpleasant news must be unfolded. The announcement of the German entry into Salonika within so short a time came as a shock which robbed Members of their usual appreciation of the Prime Minister's happy knack of finding the right word. This was not the occasion for a general discussion on the conduct of the war, because the House felt it would be inappropriate on a resolution of thanks to the Forces. Whatever the fortunes of war, the country must feel deep gratitude to those who risk their lives in its defence. Besides, Hore-Belisha, who is once again in his place, had already secured the Prime Minister's virtual consent to a two days' discussion on the general situation immediately after the Easter Recess. Members hope the Prime Minister will then deal with the grave issues raised by Lloyd George in the agricultural debate.

ONE MORE PACT

THE next few weeks may disclose whether the Easter egg, which Matsuoka and Molotoff laid in the Kremlin last Sunday, is just a hollow shell or full of dynamite. Although fresh from the nest it already emits several displeasing odours: there is the encouragement to Japan to seize loose chunks of the British and Dutch empires; the probable release of Japanese troops from Manchukuo, Inner Mongolia and Korea for operations against China or in the last resort against Britain and America; and finally the declaration, appended to the neutrality treaty, pledging Russia to respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of the Empire of Manchukuo and pledging Japan to do the same towards the Mongolian People's Republic.

Of these it is only the inducement to Japan to drive south which obviously aggravates a dangerous situation. It is no new departure for Russia to forget the treaty of 1924 in which it recognised China's sovereignty over Outer Mongolia; as far back as March 28, 1936, Moscow concluded a military alliance with her puppet Mongolian republic, despite China's protest. In general, Mr. Cordell Hull is right in saying that the new Pact merely recognises the existing situation.

Though legal distinctions matter little in the present jungle of international affairs, it is worth noting that jurists hold that the Soviet promise regarding Manchukuo does not constitute *de jure*, but only *de facto* recognition of Japan's satellite, although nobody can prevent Matsuoka from calling it legal recognition. *De facto* recognition also sets no precedent, because Russia granted it on three earlier occasions: by negotiating directly with Manchukuo about the sale of the Soviet-owned Chinese Eastern railway, by agreeing to a Soviet-Manchukuo exchange of consuls, and by admitting Manchukuo representatives to a mixed commission on frontier delimitation.

Japan has, perhaps, half a million men on the Manchukuo frontier. But experts doubt whether Japan can in fact withdraw more than 15,000 to 30,000 troops from the north as the result of the neutrality pact. To remove more would not only involve transport difficulties, but would expose the Japanese to internal trouble from the inhabitants of Korea, Inner Mongolia and Manchukuo, as well as to a sudden Soviet change-of-mind. Moreover, it is the Japanese navy rather than the army which is likely to come into play if Japan attacks Malaya, notably Singapore, or the Dutch East Indies.

Many Chinese, who have long feared a Russo-Japanese treaty, expected something worse than the document signed in Moscow on Easter Sunday. They dreaded a provision which would withdraw Soviet supplies to Chunking. Stalin's hand seems to have drafted most of the agreement, and this is nowhere plainer than in the omission of any published provision obliging Russia to cut her military supplies to China. There is no evidence of any such secret clause, but anxiety on this score is evident in the note of protest and inquiry addressed by Chunking to Moscow. In these curious days, however, there is nothing unusual in State A making a friendly agreement with State B while continuing to supply, by credit and barter, the sinews of war to State C against which State B is conducting a ruthless and aggressive war.

The reassurance to Japan against a Soviet stab-in-the-back is likely to give a sharp, new impulse to the Japanese southward movement. America could hardly be more alive to this Japanese threat and, if sober instead of power-drunk men were ruling in Tokio, America's ability further to tighten Japan's economic belt and United States naval dispositions in the Pacific would assure greater Japanese caution. But Matsuoka's words and deeds suggest that, after his return, the Konoye government will more than ever gamble on Hitler's victory this year before American support for Britain nears its peak.

Certainly a Japanese surprise attack on British colonies or on the Netherlands East Indies is a possibility in the very near future. If the Japanese adventurers decide to act, they will probably strike soon rather than late, on the double supposition, first that they can take what they like in East Asia without having too far to defer to Hitler while he is still heavily engaged in the west, and secondly, that the U.S.A. will be confronted with an ugly dilemma, since to enter upon a war with Japan will weaken America's capacity to help Britain if Russia, by this pact, has encouraged a collision between Japan and the Western Democracies, we must in fairness recall Britain's pre-war attempts to drive the Nazis eastwards and, more recently, the aspirations of some British diplomats to re-direct Japanese imperialism towards Russia. The laws of war are the laws of the jungle.

If Japan forces war, she will choose her own moment, but that will make no difference to the fact that a Japanese attack on American and British interests in the Pacific will admirably suit the strategic plans of the Nazis. In that event Hitler will not be embarrassed by the consideration that the Japanese-Soviet treaty sweeps aside Japan's obligation under the Axis pact to join Germany in a possible war on Russia. It may be that Hitler believes that if he fights Soviet Russia he can dispense with Japanese assistance.

No one knows whether there will be war between Germany and Russia. But the shadow that haunts Moscow gains more substance as Hitler, already entrenched on the Black Sea, advances against the only nations actively impeding his advance to the Dardanelles. The Soviet Government's rebukes to Bulgaria and Hungary and its encouragement to Turkey and Jugoslavia seem to amount to no more than a display of acute anxiety about Germany's intentions towards the Straits, Turkey, Caucasus and Ukraine. Russia's eagerness for greater freedom to meet the growing German threat relieved Matsuoka of the necessity for any snappy sales talk in Moscow. Yet the answer to the basic question, whether Russia will fight short of resisting a direct German attack, remains obscure.

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THE NEW-OLD ORDER

TWICE in the interval between two wars attempts were made to organise Europe as an economic unit. Mr. Lloyd George, round about the meeting of the unlucky conference at Genoa, launched a project for creating an international consortium, which came to be called "Europa Ltd.," for developing the backward agricultural eastern regions of our Continent. It was to carry out public works anywhere between the Baltic and the Black Sea, including, if she would open her frontiers to its operations, Soviet Russia. The other Celtic statesman, M. Briand, whose vision at moments had something of the "Welsh Wizard's" daring, went a good deal further. He invited a sceptical continent to form itself into a United States of Europe and proposed to include mutual defence within its objects. But what he chiefly wished to do was to link West and East within a single economic system. He perceived that they are complementary; he wished to give the East an assured market in the industrial West for its primary products, and doubtless he saw for French banks profitable opportunities in financing the movement of its crops and developing its latent resources. Dr. Stresemann blessed the idea and added a plan of his own for the creation of a single European currency. Downing Street, however, was frigid, and Wall Street suspected that the scheme had a "point" (to use the jargon of diplomacy) against America. A generous dream came to nothing, and one must confess that M. Briand had not thought it out with much attention to detail.

It is this idea that Europe can be organised as a single economic whole which is the kernel of Hitler's New Order, but it has been distorted with a brutality of which only the Nazi mind is capable. The phrase is as familiar as the swastika, but for few of us has it yet acquired any precise meaning. Certainly it does not mean the creation of any international society with a coherent political structure. Its items—one cannot call them members—will never meet and deliberate in common. Each must deal separately with the Power that dominates it. The reality is the overwhelming might, industrial and military, of the German Reich, capable of using her central geographical position to overawe in the air and on land the isolated satellite States that lie in a ring around her. It would be a mistake, however, to conceive the New Order solely in military terms. Like every modern empire, it serves an economic purpose, which is in plain words the enrichment of the Master-Race by the exploitation of the satellite States. For a time Hitler induced the world to believe that his central purpose was to include all Germans within the Third Reich. What he is really doing is to concentrate within it the chief industrial regions of Europe. This thesis has been worked out with much careful detail in a notable study by The Royal Institute of International Affairs.* The frontiers of this empire are not yet finally drawn. In the Reich Hitler has incorporated Luxemburg, Lorraine and Alsace, with their mines and industries, Austria, the highly industrialised Sudetenland, Silesia with its coal mines, the western part of Poland, formerly Posen, to which he has significantly added Lodz, with its cotton mills, Danzig, the Corridor and Memel. Bohemia, as a protectorate, falls within its Customs and currency area. What fate is designed for Belgium and Holland is uncertain, but Rotterdam is described as a German port. Nazi propaganda has talked of separating the northern French coal-field of the Pas de Calais from France. But even without these speculative additions the concentration of industry is impressive. In the new Reich 40 per cent. of the occupied population is engaged in industry or mining and some 29 per cent. in agriculture. In the rest of Europe, excluding Russia, the corresponding percentages are 23 and 53. These figures understate the contrast; more decisive is the fact that this aggrandised Reich dominates heavy industry, for it produces three-quarters of the Continent's output of steel. Here, then, is the basis for something approaching an industrial monopoly. Such industries as there are outside the Reich can either be penetrated and controlled by the German cartels or else crushed out of existence.

How will economic unity be achieved? There will be no Customs Union; Europe will not become a single free-trade area. The aim is to make it self-sufficient in essentials, so that it will not be dependent on overseas trade. In so far as it does decide to raise its own standard of life by importing luxuries from the outer world, the whole of this trade will be controlled by a single authority, which will wield enormous bargaining power, since it will buy and sell for the entire Continent. This means that such industry as may be left standing outside the Reich will be completely at the mercy of Berlin, which can cut it off at will both from foreign sources of raw material and from extra-European markets. Marshal Pétain had correctly grasped the economic future of France when he said that her destiny is to become a mainly agricultural country, with some small luxury industries.

We in this country are quick to perceive the crude despotism of these arrangements. What we are less willing to grasp is that they do offer some advantages to the primary producers of the Danube Valley and the Balkans. They gain security; they are offered an assured market for their surplus crops at stable prices under long-term contracts. The long nightmare of their experience during the slump is ended. They need not fear that their harvests will rot unsold, nor are they exposed to the competition of the better-organised or more efficient agricultural countries overseas. It was not coercion or military pressure that originally drove them into their first barter dealings with Dr. Schacht; he came to them in the guise of a saviour. But while the farmer gains security, these transactions work out unhappily for the mass of the consumers in these satellite countries. Once a Balkan country has sold its whole exportable crop of wheat or tobacco to Germany it must take in return what she chooses to send it and at her price. The clearing-house system leaves it no choice; if it wants any return for its exports it must import German goods. In his turn the German manufacturer has become a monopolist who has no longer a motive to maintain quality and content himself with a moderate profit, since international competition has been eliminated.

The Nazis are, of course, perfectly well aware of what they are doing. They are avowedly organising Europe for their own material ends. This was frankly stated by Dr. Funk, the Reich Minister of Economics:—

> The peace-time economy must guarantee to the Greater German Reich a maximum of security, and to the German people a maximum of consumption of goods in order to increase their welfare. European economics must be directed to this end.

The New Order is, in brief, a plan for taking advantage of the notorious inequality in remuneration between the industrial populations and the primary producers. Of this form of exploitation we are too little aware, though it ranks high among the salient social facts of our day. The author of this able Chatham House publication cites as a recognised measure of it in Europe the fact that the value of the output of the average industrial worker, at world prices, exceeds that of the average agricultural worker or miner by amounts that range from 60 to 100 per cent. Hitler, needless to say, did not make this inequality, which is far from being a recent phenomenon. What he proposes to do is to concentrate the better-paid work of the Continent within the Reich for the benefit of the Master-Race, while he condemns the people of the satellite States to confine themselves to the worst-paid labour. His technique, as it operates to-day, will aggravate the disparity. Nor is this all. Germany is now importing about two million labourers from the satellite States, half of them prisoners of war, the rest victims of some subtle form of compulsion. The intention seems to be to continue this intake of foreign labour after the war, and as Dr. Kehrl, of the Reich Economic Ministry put it, the German worker will be used only for the higher forms of work, which means that he will get the highest wages. Poles are thought to be well suited for this unskilled menial labour. The 400,000 of them drafted for work in Germany are paid only about 25s. a month with their food. In conformity with this semi-servile status Poles will in future be denied all higher and even secondary education. In the part of Poland annexed to the Reich all land and industrial property owned by Poles has been confiscated.

It is easy to forecast what this enforced specialisation on agriculture will mean for the satellite States of the Danube Valley, the Balkans and Poland. Their populations have a high rate of fertility. Already over wide areas their peasants are farming dwarf holdings that yield a bare subsistence. For their younger sons there is no prospect either in industry or through emigration. The labour market is overcrowded and there is no prospect that wages or real incomes can rise. The New Order, stereotyping these conditions with semi-servile employment in the Reich as the only road of escape, can only mean the overcrowding of the soil and increasing misery for the agricultural populations.

Every empire has exploited its colonies and its subject populations by attempting to reserve the profits of industry to itself. Our ancestors forbade the American colonies to refine sugar or make steel, and on the eve of their revolt Adam Smith denounced these "impertinent badges of slavery." In our dealings with colonists of our own race we learnt our lesson promptly, but it is only recently that we have partially reversed our traditional policy of discouraging industry in India. Our own island presents no exception to the rule that rewards the town worker and the tiller of the soil by grossly unequal measures. We have just raised the agricultural labourer's weekly wage to 48s. and

* Europe under Hitler. 6*d*.

the docker's to £4 2s. 6d. Both must toil hard in all weathers, but surely the farmhand is the more skilled and versatile of the two. The singularity of the Nazis is not that they profit by this inequality; it is that they deliberately make it the conscious principle of their policy and aggravate it by their incomparable brutality.

This first brief sketch of the Nazi New Order should stimulate our own thinking about the future. We no longer plan in a vacuum as the architects of the League did. Whatever we offer will come as an alternative to a Nazi system which functions already. There is our opportunity but also our temptation. It will be easy to smash the fetters of the subject peoples and to obliterate the memory of Nazi insolence by behaving with ordinary humanity and good manners. In our easy-going way shall we then be content to restore the Europe that existed before Hitler. That would be a fatal mistake. It was an unstable Europe, tormented by economic insecurity and disorder. The Balkan peasants were not yet enslaved to the Third Reich, but they were loaded with impossible debts and desperate for lack of a secure market. That is why they sold themselves to Dr. Schacht. If we leave them to the free play of economic forces, the same thing will happen again. Germany might be defeated and disarmed, but her market would still be an irresistible magnet. Our opportunity, then, is to work out an economic system with America's co-operation, which will promise the primary producer an assured market without enslaving him under the clearing-house and barter system. The Americans are planning such a system for their own continent. Can we adapt it to the needs of other continents, and more especially of Europe? It is the fashion in these days to react against the Nazi defiance of every principle of social morality by drawing up charters of rights. Mr. H. G. Wells, Mr. Roosevelt and Lord Halifax have all tried their hand at it. All of them have rightly laid the first stress on freedom. But if we could propose an objective to the new International Community, after the establishment of freedom, it would be this: so to order the world's economic system that the standard of life of the agricultural producers, be they brown or black or white, shall be raised to the level of the industrial populations. That calls for careful study. It probably involves the abandonment at least of the extremer forms of specialisation. It may demand the fostering of industry in the backward colonial countries. It may involve a deliberate modification by international controls of the whole price structure. It should be accompanied by grants from the richer States to develop the services of health and education in the poorer States. It would be a long undertaking, but it promises more for human equality than any political revolution.

1931 AND 1941

THE Budget for 1941 totals £4,207 millions, of which £3,500 millions relate to provisional Votes of Credit for the war. The estimated deficit is £2,421 millions. The Budget has been received with grim satisfaction. Now let us look back ten years to 1931. The original estimates for that financial year were £751 millions, and that included £52 millions for debt redemption. There was a possibility that in the following year the net deficit would be £70 millions and the country went into convulsions. 1931 was the year of the famous May Report which assured us on the highest expert authority that the gorgeous palaces, the great globe itself, yea, all which we inherit, would dissolve unless heroic measures and all-round sacrifices closed this fearsome gap of £70 millions. It is an education to re-peruse this famous document. It was meant to be impressive and sensational, and so it was at the time. Now it reads like a chapter from a comic history of Britain written around the seven tailors of Tooley Street. There it lies, and spattered in leaded type through its pages are portentous paragraphs designed to intone on the ear with the solemn booming of a minute gun. *We view with deep concern. . . . We view with great alarm. . . . We cannot endorse. . . . We are strongly of the opinion. . . . We are opposed to any further extension of this service. . . . Drastic action is necessary to remedy the position.*

What did the Committee view with great concern? What could it not endorse? What did it strenuously oppose? The answer—and here the reader of to-day must hold on to his chair—is continuing expenditure on schools, roads, houses, water supply, health and unemployment services, colonial development, and (this goes well with to-day's rations) agricultural education and research, live stock improvement, land drainage, land settlement and afforestation. In view of the fact that millions of workers have been and are being transferred to the production of goods which will go up in smoke during the war, and in view of the general agreement to-day about the widespread and sordid blotches on our pre-war civilisation, the May Committee's pompous censures on public works schemes to relieve unemployment sound like the fantastic babblings of disordered intellects. In the twenty-one months from June, 1929, to March, 1931, schemes to the value of £70 millions had been approved for docks, water, electricity, gas, sewerage, land development, sea defence, roads, parks, civic buildings, sanitation, baths, river improvements, cemeteries and trams. The approximate present value of the Exchequer grant for these schemes was £30 millions, and, said the Committee, switching to leaded type in the middle of its paragraph, *we are inclined to regard much of the expenditure as unwise in that it has been incurred considerably in advance of requirements.* As if anything but a cemetery could come too soon in the life of humanity. Many people are now secretly grateful to Hitler for giving us a chance to rebuild our cities, but the Committee viewed with deep concern the steadily growing charge upon the Exchequer for the housing of the working classes. The table arousing this apprehension showed an increase of this burden on the Exchequer from £12.7 millions in 1931 to £13.6 millions in 1932 up to the stupendous total of £14.5 millions in 1933. No one, said the Committee magnanimously of a proposed development of the National Health maternity scheme, can dispute the desirability of taking action to reduce the serious loss of life and health in connection with maternity, but at the same time we cannot but regard this scheme as unduly ambitious in scope. Most serious of all is the proposed additional charge of £1,500,000 per annum on the Exchequer. (Then boom goes the leaded type). *In present circumstances the Exchequer cannot afford to assume this liability, and in our view improvement of this service should be sought without any extra State grant.* We cannot, said the Committee, regard any loan from the Exchequer to the Unemployment Insurance Scheme as other than an irrecoverable advance. The last penny of the loan has just been paid off in 1941, not 1971, as was originally arranged.

The sequel to the publication of this document is notorious. The report came out in August and wiped the sea-serpent off the front page. According to one malicious story the only official at the Treasury who understood the rudiments of foreign exchange was away on vacation and so we fell off the gold standard. There was a General Election with a savage lynching of the Labour Party, and Great Britain got the worst Government in its history. The 1941 Budget is eloquent testimony to that. An incidental and ironical feature of the affair is that the Chairman of the Committee was Sir George (now Lord) May, a prominent figure in the insurance world. His industry is now on the dole which so gravely disturbed his committee. By a special concession its life funds are to-day taxed at 7s. 6d. in the £ instead of 10s. At the full charge some of the companies might not earn their net interest, but on the principles of capitalist private enterprise that is their risk. The Government could have called upon them to eat into their reserves and then into their capital, and only at the last resort when the shareholders' interest had disappeared have guaranteed the policy-holders. But the concession has been made gratuitously without any scrutiny of directors' fees, to say nothing of a means test. Let Lord May, whatever he is doing now, chew upon that.

Most of us realise now that never again will an economic crisis be dealt with in this fantastic manner. Under the lead of this report Government expenditure was drastically curtailed; local authorities, public utilities and large businesses followed suit, and the unemployment figures mounted to over three million. The repercussions went round the world, currency after currency tumbled from its perch, and an ex-corporal was swung into power by six million German unemployed. Thousands of the British bourgeois who in 1931 were obsessed with fear and anger because of a problematic reduction of the order of two per cent. in their standard of living have to-day abandoned house and furniture and written them off. The car, the index of their sacrosanct standard of living, stands idle in the garage. Many now boast of the satisfactions of a simpler life and the relief of no longer having to keep up with the Joneses. A fraction of the sacrifice willingly borne to-day would have settled the whole affair of 1931 in five minutes. There would have been no crisis, no panic, and, many economists would now asseverate, no sacrifice at all; on the contrary, the solution lay precisely in all the things that the May Committee so eloquently denounced. Nor is this view confined to economists suspected of unorthodoxy or to wild men of the Left. The Right and the City will expect the Government to spend its way out of the next depression. Even before this war the Government when challenged about its plans for the post-armament slump, instead of loftily repudiating any public works programme as demonstrably and provedly ineffectual, protested almost indignantly that it had all its schemes up its sleeve ready for instant application.

Why did so many economists go wrong on this issue? Clearly orthodox monetary theory and practice were fundamentally unsound. From being a mere instrument of accountancy money had become the governing factor in the modern economy. It has required total war to bring a general appreciation of the fact that labour and real equipment are the true and only sources of the national income. It may be argued that this has always been an elementary postulate of the text books and that money was never regarded as anything more than the oil which greased the machine or the veil behind which the real processes took place. Nevertheless, it was the monetary mechanism which broke down in 1931 and dragged the whole economy with it. By great fortune its breakdowns in the 19th century were of short duration, but it was the damn fools who were right in suspecting it on these occasions and the wise men who were wrong. Poverty in the midst of plenty was the theme of Henry George, who thought the evil lay in the private ownership of land, but there were the Greenback Party, the silver men, the sixteen-to-one men, the bimetallists, and in our time "cranks" as various as J. A. Hobson, Foster and Catchings and Major Douglas, with his Social Credit followers. All these people advanced arguments which the orthodox found amusing and easy to refute. But they were right in seeing that something was fundamentally wrong with the monetary approach and with various degrees of accuracy they saw what was wrong In view of the recent Budget a tribute is appropriate here to Mr. Keynes, who from 1923 was convinced of grave deficiencies in monetary theory and practice, and has hammered away at the problem ever since. It is obvious now that the pundits of the 19th century, in default of a complete theory of money (and this includes bank money), played for safety by making its issue and control a State monopoly, tied in turn to the shibboleth of gold. Thanks to successive fortuitous gold discoveries the system worked up to 1914, and after that war it seemed about to take on a new lease of life. But the depression following 1929 has killed it stone dead, after it had practically discredited the whole social and economic system. For the man in the street could see the folly of the solemn excavation and re-burial of gold, with national budgets rigidly bound up with foreign exchanges, while coffee and wheat were burned and unemployment and starvation stalked the world. In the 90's dismal processions of the unemployed walked the streets chanting "Work or Maintenance," and they were lucky if they did not return from their protests with bloody sconces inflicted by truncheons. That cry of the workless has become the implicit foundation of any new order. No monetary shibboleths, no budgetary conventions, and no accounting formulæ can conceal the fact that all the available labour of the world can be usefully applied to the resources of the world, and that any system which does not secure that result stands condemned. PARAJ

A LONDON DIARY

ALMOST everyone I meet takes it for granted that this war is much harder to bear than the last one. I feel differently. True, this time the Germans have triumphed over a far larger area of Europe; nor was there anything before to compare in grimness with the vertiginous collapse of France and our own prospects during the week before Dunkirk. True, the civilian population endured nothing in the last war comparable with the bombing this time. But the present war has one prodigious advantage that seems to be surprisingly overlooked: very few people have been killed. Before it is over, it may of course cause even more deaths than the "Great" war. But it seems to me that most of those who ought to remember, have in fact forgotten those daily casualty lists, day after day, week after week, year after year. It is hideous now that children should be maimed and murdered, but apart from this, I for my part think it better that death should strike indiscriminately, not only at the young men; and I am thankful that there is no longer that sharp and ugly division between the men at the Front and the rest of the population. There is another point which is not so generally applicable, but which I am sure must affect many beside myself who were adults in 1914. The last war seemed largely fortuitous and purposeless: though the Germans aimed at hegemony, this did not (at least manifestly) threaten all that was valuable in the world. One could feel, therefore, that there was much truth in Barbusse's comment: "It is not two armies fighting, it is one great army committing suicide." Very few people can feel this to-day. And if I suggest that this war is easier to bear, it is not only because it has hitherto been less lethal, but because the issues involved are conspicuously more vital.

* * *

A Frenchman who escaped from France to join General de Gaulle told me a story which I hope has not already been printed. I like it because it exemplifies a quality that I have often noticed in the Germans of my acquaintance. With all their methodicalness, they enjoy rising superior to inescapable facts. You tell them, for instance, that it takes at least an hour and a half to reach Henley by road from London. They are too methodical—or too conceited—to take what you say on trust; they look at a map, discover Henley is only 35 miles away, and know that they average 35 miles an hour in their motor. They arrive, therefore, half an hour late for luncheon, not having taken into consideration the traffic conditions between Piccadilly and Maidenhead. It is this quality in Germans that is responsible for what is technically called the "idealism" of their philosophers—and I hope it may yet help to bring them to grief. Here, then, is my Frenchman's story. On one of the beaches of Northern France the Germans were practising debarkation. At ten o'clock one morning an officer had himself rowed out, carrying a long pole marked in metres and decimetres. This he stuck firmly into the sand at the point which showed that a man would be just not out of his depth. The next morning at the same hour a flotilla of barges packed with troops was drawn up parallel with the shore on a line with the pole. At the word of command the soldiers leapt as one man into the sea—and, almost as one man, were promptly drowned. The officer, you see, had not counted on the tide being an hour higher.

* * *

The need many people have of listening to the wireless news four or even five times a day seems to me curious. It is specially common among those who have little else to do, and who, I believe, feel obscurely that, if they do not listen each time, they are not pulling their weight. I have myself a dislike, which I recognise as neurotic, of listening to the news. For years now it has so much more often been bad than good; and, particularly since Munich, the bland detached tones of the announcers suggest to me a Harley Street specialist informing one, very urbanely, that one has an incurable disease. Partly for this reason, partly because I was working so long on the French broadcasts, I prefer listening to the B.B.C. news in French. I have been surprised to find that several of my friends have the same habit, considering that the news is better presented. The editor responsible for the B.B.C. news in all European languages is certainly one of the ablest men I have met.

* * *

The other day I had the odd experience of turning on the wireless, and hearing myself talking, in French. I have spoken in French several times, and on one occasion I first spoke "live" into the microphone and afterwards made a record of my talk so that it could be repeated. It is usual, I believe, for speakers not to recognise their own voices: I certainly did not, and the experience can be recommended as an antidote to conceit. The microphone emphasises all one's faults of accent and intonation; and I was horrified in particular by the impurity of my "o"s. I remembered Casanova's story of the singer with a lisp about to make her debut in Vienna: he promised that she should not lisp once, and rewrote the libretto, changing all words that had an "s" in them. I decided that next time I would write myself a text without a long "o" in it. It was a poignant pleasure in one of my talks to mention the names of a number of French towns and villages, and to think that hotel keepers and others, who had once received me so charmingly and with whom I had had long talks, might now be listening, in such places as Semblançay, Chavoire, Brantôme, Ascain, Barbazon, Sauveterre and my favourite Souillac.

* * *

In the beautiful church at Dorchester, on the old road to Oxford, a stone in the floor bears the following inscription to the memory of Mrs. Sarah Fletcher, who died in 1799 at the age of 29:

> Reader!
>
> If thou hast a Heart fam'd for Tenderness and Pity, Contemplate this Spot. In which are deposited the Remains of a Young Lady, whose artless Beauty, Innocence of Mind, and gentle Manners once obtained her the Love and Esteem of all who knew her. But whose nerves were too delicately spun to bear the rude Shakes and Jostlings which we meet with in this transitory World. Nature gave way: She sunk and died a Martyr to Excessive Sensibility.

There was a moment not so many months ago when I heard in the air above the Bodleian and all its incomparable neighbours the loud uneven roaring of countless German aeroplanes. In London one had got quite hardened to this noice, but in Oxford, well, Nature did not give way, but I did find, like Mrs. Fletcher, that my nerves were too delicately spun.

* * *

It is amusing to notice how much passion is excited by changes in such arbitrary symbols as mere words. Perhaps we still obscurely

believe in their literally magic power, or, as I prefer to think, we cherish them as instruments with a craftsman's hatred for anything that may blunt their precision or make them unshapely. Mere conservatism in language is foolish—English must go on absorbing foreign words and forging new tools as it did in Shakespeare's day. But is there any point in novelty for novelty's sake? I found myself growing comically indignant the other day because somebody talked about "wardening"—it seemed so unnecessary. The word "warden," which has been rescued by the war from obsolescence, means a man who "wards"; and now that a word is needed for his activities, why innovate with a noun turned into a verb instead of reviving the old verb "to ward"? A similar instance is the growing use of the verb "to conscript." I suppose we may soon read that "subscripters should inscript their names, since discontent in such circumscripted conditions as those descripted may fairly be ascripted to the conscripted men." According to the Oxford Dictionary the verb "to conscript" is an Americanism dating from 1860, while the verb "to conscribe" has a respectable native ancestry going back to 1660.

* * *

Being by nature an optimist, I am hoping that the war will have a permanently good effect on English cooking. It was delicious to be given a grilled sole, followed by roast duck with peas, and strawberries or raspberries and cream. Such a native meal could be as excellent as the most elaborate inventions contrived by the imaginative cooks of Périgord, Savoy or the Lyonnais. But good English cooking requires very good and expensive materials; and now that turbot is 4*s.* 9*d.* a pound and noble sirloins are unprocurable, English cooks must fall back on the foreign kickshaws they used to despise. The superiority of French cooking depends upon its economy as well as upon its variety; vegetables, milk and stock provide a soup worthy of an alderman; rice, scraps of meat or fish, and herbs combine to make the main dish; and an open tart filled with sliced apples or with a *purée* of prunes (flavoured, when oranges arrive, with a little orange-juice) completes a meal that is cheap as well as delicious. Unluckily the proletariat are even more conservative in their food than the bourgeoisie. If the wives of artisans and agricultural labourers learnt to make French peasant soups and to cook rice properly, and if their husbands could learn to appreciate such delicacies, it would be equivalent to a considerable rise in real wages. But in this country the average man is not a much better judge of food than he is of painting or poetry—he indubitably prefers, for instance, the insipid white tin-loaf to brown or wholemeal bread. For the benefit of the less unadventurous reader, I append a recipe, which, if not very cheap, is certainly not extravagant. It has been given me by my housekeeper, after whom I shall name it "Coquille St. Jacques Harland":

> For four persons. Simmer four scallops for 20 minutes in half a pint of milk, with a little chopped onion, a carrot, cut up half a bay leaf and a sprig of parsley. At the same time boil two large teacupfuls of rice with a little salt and pepper, also for 20 minutes. While these are cooking, prepare a sauce with a tablespoonful of margarine blended with a tablespoonful of flour: cook for one minute, add to this the strained liquid from the scallops, salt, pepper, and a teaspoonful of anchovy essence. Cook till thick. Then strain the rice, chop up the scallops and mix them well with the rice, adding a little margarine. Serve with the sauce poured over.

This sounds more complicated than it is. The result, in my opinion, is comparable with any *pilaff d'écrévisses* that one used to eat in Paris at Drouant's or "La Pérouse."

RAYMOND MORTIMER

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to Alexander Dall.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

German victories may be due to British prayers. We may have any number of spiritual fifth columnists in our midst. To those who pray for the Boche I would recommend the study of *Black Record*, by Sir Robert Vansittart, and to-day's news from Belgrade. It may keep them on the right lines.—Letter in the *Scotsman*.

Back in town after personal appearance at Blackpool, Phyllis Calvert. She was up there for preview of *Kipps* at opera house. And she made her first speech. She's to be the love interest in *Pitt the Younger*, with Robert Donat, starting at Shepherd's Bush next month. "Pitt's love life seems to have been negligible," she says, "but I'm told they're building it up a bit to make a part for me."—*Evening Standard*.

Sir,—In your leading article on March 31st you stated that through Jugoslavia's action Hitler had suffered his greatest diplomatic defeat yet, and that Mussolini had, in the battle off Crete, also suffered a devastating defeat. But how many people link these defeats with, and attribute them to, the Day of Prayer held on March 23rd? To do so seems to me the most obvious explanation. Furthermore, it is a well-known fact that the three most successful weeks for us during the past year have been those almost immediately following the days of prayer; viz., the "miraculous" evacuation from Dunkirk, the smashing defeat of Hitler's aeroplanes and barges on September 15th and 16th, and the recent case. What is the lesson? Is it not to have another day of prayer, and soon?—Letter in *Gloucestershire Echo*.

The secret of the arrival of the British army was well kept. That they were there was evident from the veiled hints which have been dropped.—*Daily Mail*.

On Sunday forenoon, March 30th, I observed a huge flock of wild geese flying north and making the usual clamour. But what I did particularly note was they flew in the most perfect V. It is well known that wild geese always fly in a letter of the alphabet, but never before did I see a perfect V. I am sure it was a lucky omen for Britain, the sea birds celebrating the sea victories. The great flock and unusual V formation must have been observed by many people.—Letter in *Annandale Observer*.

"It is up to the public to pay only reasonable prices for fish."—Lord Woolton.

WHAT KIND OF EDUCATION IN THE ARMY?

[In our issue of March 1st we published an article on Education in the Army, by Mr. W. E. Williams, who is liaison officer for Education in the Scottish, Northern, Eastern and A.A. Commands. The scheme he outlined has only been in operation since December. The following article expresses a critical view that has reached us from many quarters.]

MUCH is being written nowadays about educational facilities in the Army. No one doubts that this is a highly important subject, because the Army of to-day includes in its ranks an increasing proportion of the citizens of the country who have been uprooted from their normal lives and occupations for the purpose of undergoing military training. It is vital, therefore, that we should not be easily fobbed off with the view that all's well with Army Education. We have had lots of sunshine talk in this war—and it's not done us much good. Official spokesmen naturally tend to look at the Education Scheme from official pedestals, and they are greatly gratified at the response to their provisions and the immense amount of work being done. They also tend to resent any criticism but their own. However, students of the history of Army Education must put a few pertinent questions to them before they can be satisfied that development is taking place along the right lines.

We have been frequently told that this war is a continuation of the last. In the last war many educational schemes appeared in the middle of the war and all of them remained on an unofficial basis until September, 1918. The demand came, it should be noted, from within the Army, and many classes were organised inside Units without reference to civilian educational bodies. The Y.M.C.A. Universities Committee and bodies like the Workers' Educational Association—then in its infancy—played a large part in providing lectures and classes in 1917 and 1918. Details of the developments of that period can be studied in the Reports of the Adult Education Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction, issued in 1919. It is an instructive point, emphasised in these Reports, that the interest in education arose out of the conditions of Army life and the events and character of the war. The demand from the soldiers was, in the main, to know and learn more about the issues involved in the war and the problems to which it was likely to give rise. Thus the educational facilities provided were particularly designed to cater for the needs of soldiers who were destined to assume the responsibilities of citizenship in the post-war world. The unofficial beginnings lead to the Gorell Scheme in 1918.

What was the "gospel according to Gorell," as it has been called? It was the endeavour "to bring educational facilities within the reach of every officer and every man, so far as the conditions of military service permit, and to view them educationally from the moment of enlistment to the moment of discharge." An army personnel was to be created to do this work, including special education officers. When the situation was reviewed after the war through the Ministry of Reconstruction, by a Committee which included the then Master of Balliol, Professor R. H. Tawney, Mr. (now the Rt. Hon.) Ernest Bevin, and Mr. (now the Rt. Hon.) Arthur Greenwood, the following recommendations were made:

1. Education of a general and non-vocational character should be regarded as an essential part of the training of all recruits.
2. The curriculum of studies should be based upon those subjects associated with citizenship.

3. A permanent resident officer should be attached to each area to give continuity to the work and to co-ordinate the work of voluntary bodies with that of the military authorities and of the local education authorities. The establishment of an organisation similar to the R.A.M.C. was proposed.

4. Adequate provision should be made for the supply of suitable literature.

In 1920 the Army Educational Corps was founded. But it was not equipped to do the work of adult education. It was a very small body of schoolmasters which concentrated on the provision of tests and examinations of elementary and matriculation standards and the teaching of vocational subjects, and did not deal at all with the provision of adult classes of a general character. Thus the 1919 recommendations were not implemented. And at the beginning of this war the A.E.C. was transferred to " other duties."

In this war the educational schemes again started on an unofficial basis, through the work of the W.E.A., the University Regional Committees, and the Local Education Authorities. In March, 1940, the then War Minister, Mr. Oliver Stanley, M.P., was persuaded to establish a Committee to examine the need for educational facilities and to make proposals: also to include in its survey the questions of welfare and recreation. This Committee, under the chairmanship of Lieut.-General Sir Robert Haining, reported in September, when a leaflet entitled *Education in the Wartime Army* was issued by the War Office, containing extracts from the Haining Report. This was the launching of the scheme which is now in operation.

By the device of question-and-answer let us see how far this scheme implements the recommendations of 1919 and improves upon the ideas of the last war:

1. *Q.*—Does the new scheme provide education of a general character as an essential part of the training of all recruits?

A.—Emphatically no. Education is put on a par with welfare and recreation. It is considered as an additional comfort for the troops and is not related to their training either as soldiers or as citizens. No special time is set aside for it; and great stress is laid on technical, as compared with non-vocational, studies.

2. *Q.*—Is the provision of education related to the encouragement of the democratic spirit and the fact that the soldiers of to-day are the citizens of to-morrow?

A.—No mention is made of citizenship or democracy in *Education in the Wartime Army*. The variety of subjects dealt with in lectures is advertised, and education is presented as " mental stimulus," " mental contentment," " keeping men's minds interested and alert," etc., etc., but not as something related to the war and its issues nor to the social emancipation with which the W.E.A., for example, has always been concerned.

3. *Q.*—Are the standards and quality of adult education emphasised, including the importance of encouraging continuity of study?

A.—The scheme does not aim to maintain adult educational standards, but to provide popular, instructive, and entertaining lectures in large quantities. It does not therefore aim to do the job that the University Extra-Mural Departments, the W.E.A., and the Local Education Authorities do in civilian life.

4. *Q.*—Ought not a new Corps to be established in order to undertake adult education in the Army, providing as adequate an administrative and teaching staff as possible?

A.—There is a very strong case for this proposal, but the present scheme does not include it. The A.E.C., which never really distinguished the education of the soldier from that of his child, has been revived and expanded—and that is taken as sufficient for the day. It also provides for Unit Education Officers who do the work of supplying educational needs in addition to their normal military duties and who must discover and employ any talent in their Units—architects, journalists, councillors—for the giving of interesting lectures, and calling it education. Nobody should, of course, criticise this making the best of a bad job—so long as it is recognised as a bad job. Might it not be better, though, to collect the talent and organise it, so as to provide a really purposive education based upon a curriculum of studies associated with citizenship?

Undoubtedly there is plenty of good work being done. Many sections of the Adult Education Movement are putting their backs into it, numerous Unit Officers are intelligent about it, and there are excellent men in the revitalised A.E.C. But much of the effort is wasted and misdirected because the principles of the thing are neglected or deliberately ignored.

The Adult Education Movement has always directed its efforts towards the democratisation of our educational system, towards getting equal opportunities of learning for children. In that sphere we have struggled against the Rt. Hon., Alderman, aye and sometimes Professor, Blueface, as well as in the sphere of free expression. Must we not learn to-day that education in the Army has something to do with the democratisation of the Army and the creation of an educated post-war democracy? But, we shall be told, by your schemes of teachers in uniform under the military hierarchy and education as part of the training programme, you will nullify academic freedom, make lectures into parades, and the education will become propaganda in the hands of the Government. Teachers and students have always fought for the maintenance of free expression and intellectual independence in the educational system as a whole, in the schools as well as in adult classes: and very largely they have won through in this country. Cannot the Adult Education Movement to-day concentrate on gaining the same educational rights for the citizens in uniform—or is it going to be satisfied with a makeshift scheme which does not lay the foundations of democratic education within the Army itself?

THOMAS STEVENS

CHEERFUL GIVER

IT seemed to me rather curious that the newspapers made so much of the story of the retired stockbroker who gave away envelopes stuffed with pound-notes to a number of soldiers the other day. Wishing to show his gratitude for the escape of his family and himself during the last air raid on Coventry, he filled eight envelopes with fifty pound notes each, sealed them, and, in the course of a train journey, gave four of them to soldiers and the four others to R.A.F. men—perfect strangers to him—bidding them not to open the envelopes till he had left the train. Perhaps the story attracted interest chiefly as a story of happiness, for, whatever the height of our brows, few of us can resist the appeal of a happy story. And here was a story of nine happy men—the eight young men who received fifty pounds each and the retired stockbroker who gave them this unexpected piece of good fortune. Who was the happiest man of the nine it is impossible to tell. They say that it is more blessed to give than to receive; but it is blessed to receive, too, and, if the young men were not almost as happy as the old stockbroker, I know nothing of human nature.

Still it would be hard to over-estimate the pleasures of giving. I have never known a man of the giving type who did not look as if he were enjoying life even more than if he had won a bet. Dickens has sometimes been looked on as a sentimental exaggerator for inventing such types as the Cheeryble brothers. Probably, however, it would be impossible to exaggerate the innocent happiness of a philanthropist. Philanthropy is so strong a temptation that ordinary men have to be warned against its perils. That is the moral of *Timon of Athens*. Here we see a natural philanthropist indulging his hobby so blindly that he wastes his substance on a riffraff of parasites. *King Lear* again is a warning to natural givers to exercise restraint in their favourite pastime even in the bosom of the family. There was a Victorian play, *A Pair of Spectacles*, which showed a natural giver temporarily soured by the discovery that most of his benevolence had reached the wrong people.

The passion for giving must, it seems to me, be widespread if it needs all these admonitions to keep it within bounds. All those Victorian homilies on thrift would have been pointless if the ordinary man were by nature a saver. People lectured him on thrift because his instinctive generosity had by some means to be curbed. Charity had to be moderated at all costs. If we were inclined to be givers, appeals were made to us to think less of our own pleasure than of the demoralising effect of our gifts on those who received them. I have sometimes been conscience-stricken after giving a penny to a blind beggar, to read an article describing the injury I had done him. I could not deny that the gift was a piece of pure self-indulgence on my part, but it was only when I read an article of the kind that I realised how far I had gone to undermine the blind beggar's character. It was generally agreed in those days that it is easier to undermine a man's character with a penny than with a million pounds. Seldom did the opponents of giving urge the rich not to undermine the characters of their children by leaving them large fortunes. The moral appears to be that if you give people enough money, you will do them no harm.

The nineteenth-century philosophy of saving had, it must be admitted, a considerable effect. The output of money-boxes during the Victorian era must have been enormous. It is true that many of us found violent means of extracting the coins from our money-boxes; but the gashed mouths of the tins reproached our consciences as we made off to the transfer-shop with our loot. Saving, we knew

from the copy-books, was a virtue. "Take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves"—we all believed this, though I have sometimes wondered since whether it is true. Even while we believed it, however, we would not bring ourselves to live in the spirit of it. We may not have been cheerful givers, but at least we were cheerful spenders.

Not all the Victorian propaganda could turn us into cheerful, or even into cheerless, savers. There were many people, of course, who saved in order to give; but it was only the thought of giving that made their saving tolerable to them.

Hence the longing to give was never extinguished in the popular heart. Some years ago we had a typical example of its survival. "A mysterious stranger of extremely shabby appearance," we were told in the papers, "has in the last few days been going about London and giving to deserving institutions thousands of pounds' worth of Bank of England notes." This down-at-heel old man would go to a hospital, and leave a bagful of notes with the secretary, refusing to disclose even his intitials or to take a receipt for the money. "In some cases," it was said, "he actually rushed out of the offices after giving what he described as his 'small donation.'"

Fifty years ago, when anyone gave a large sum of money to a hospital, cynics were inclined to suggest either that it was conscience money to make up for all the wickedness he had been guilty of in growing rich, or that he was simply out for advertisement. This always seemed to me to be an over-simplification of human motives. It left out of account the fact that giving money, like giving a dinner, may be a normal man's way of enjoying himself. The fact that so many of the donors insist on remaining anonymous is proof that charity is not necessarily linked with self-advertisement. The man who walked into a London hospital one day with a gift of £5,000 and said to the secretary: "You don't know me and you don't want to," was certainly no self-advertiser. Another giver who preferred to remain anonymous dropped an envelope containing £500 into a Scarborough vicar's letter-box. Then there was a rather poorly dressed woman "with a cheery voice and a charming and self-possessed manner" who used to leave brown-paper parcels of gold and notes at the doors of hospitals and then hurry away. That is apparently one of the characteristics of secret givers: they all hurry away. I confess I have no talent for this doing good by stealth; if I possessed £1,000 and gave it away—two rather wild suppositions—I could not, I am sure, keep the matter to myself. Yet large numbers of people appear to be able to do so. The history of anonymous gifts would fill quite a long book. Anon, indeed, has contributed as magnificently to charity as to poetry.

Whether it is pleasanter to give away money anonymously or in one's name probably depends on the temperament of the giver. The mysteriousness of anonymity must be attractive to many good people: there is luxury, as there is often virtue, in keeping a secret. To other people there is added pleasure in seeing their names in print in a subscription list. To like seeing one's name in print may be one of the most fatuous of human enjoyments; but it is very common and very harmless. It even serves a useful purpose, for a man would rather see his name in print opposite a guinea than opposite ten-and-sixpence. Hence his heart expands into a larger charity. It is very hard, when a subscription-list is being prepared, to let your name go down in association with mean sums. I remember once putting my name down for £5 out of sheer bravado. Still, as I have suggested, such bravado ought to be encouraged. Let us once recognise that giving is a pleasure justifiable on Epicurean grounds, and we shall not grudge the giver his beneficial moment of vanity on seeing his name honourably in print.

One of the proofs that giving is a pleasure is the fact that Englishmen have persisted in maintaining the voluntary system in running their hospitals. Common sense tells us that hospitals should be paid for and kept in a high state of efficiency out of public funds. But the English people have again and again rejected a proposal that this should be done: they saw that, if it were, the pleasures of personal giving would be curtailed to a lamentable extent. It may be argued that, to pay through taxes is to give no less than to send a cheque signed by oneself. But the Englishman does not see things like this. Until quite recently he resented taxation as a form of state robbery, and the notion of paying for a hospital through taxes revolted him as other people were revolted by the notion of supporting a hospital by sweepstakes. So profoundly charitable is he that he views everything that would limit the opportunities of charity with suspicion. Many years ago, after Mr. Bernard Shaw had delivered a lecture on Socialism, a little man rose at the back of the hall and asked: "If Socialism is established and the poor are abolished, how am I to find an outlet for my charitable instincts?" It was the heart-cry of a born giver.

Since the war began, the English have shown themselves to be a nation of born givers to a greater degree than anyone could have believed possible. Fifty years ago most people would have said that, if the Income Tax were raised to 7*s.* 6*d.* and after that to 10*s.*, the national love of giving would disappear like snow in the sun. But it has not done so. In the first place, the Englishman did not begin to like Income Tax till it became 7*s.* 6*d.* in the pound. In the second place, having paid his Income Tax more cheerfully than ever before, he looked round for new ways of giving away as much of the rest of his income as possible. He began modestly enough with Spitfire funds; but when War Weapons Weeks were started, his giving became unrestrained, torrential. So far as I can discover, if you ask him for a million pounds, he now insists on giving you three million. Nothing apparently can stop the flow. Community giving has taken the place of community singing. The retired stockbroker chucking his £50 envelopes to soldiers has become a typical national figure. This is one of the many things I could not have believed possible unless I had lived to see them. Y. Y.

A LIVING THEATRE

MOST actors are simple in their ambitions. A good part, a good audience and a good salary—they ask for little else; but in order to give their best work, they need also leaders to serve, leaders who have some sort of policy to steady them (as well as a director to bully and encourage them and check them from becoming too obedient to the demands of their less discriminating admirers).

Tradition is something of a fetish to the actor, but to-day our theatrical traditions have worn somewhat thin. The great Victorian actors were only a generation removed from Macready, Kemble, Edmund Kean, and these, in turn, could remember Mrs. Siddons, Garrick, Sheridan, and so the "Great Tradition," with all its glories and base imitations, its weakness and its strength, was carried from old school to new school in an almost unbroken steady flow. But the last war, and the death of the most prominent actor-managers soon after—Tree, Wyndham, Alexander—brought the tradition to a sudden stop, especially as this period was followed by the early death of a number of important leading theatrical figures, Charles Hawtrey, Dennis Eadie, J. B. Fagan, Nigel Playfair, Leslie Faber and Gerald Du Maurier, leaving gaps in the ranks of managers, producers and actors impossible to fill for a considerable time. In addition, Granville Barker, our finest Shakespearean scholar and stage-director, retired from the working theatre. This was another major setback and an irreparable loss to any project for the creation of a theatre with classical repertoire in this country.

From 1920 to 1940 the theatre in London became sharply divided into two sections—the West End commercial theatre, and the experimental and group theatres playing on Sunday with private membership. These largely came to replace the Sunday societies which had previously launched so many successful experimental performances in the twenty years before and during the Great War.

In Paris, a short time before the present war, the Comédie Française, which had been rapidly deteriorating into a museum institution through uninspired direction, was given new life by the inclusion on its board of a group of brilliant directors, including Charles Dullin and Gaston Baty, men who had previously distinguished themselves in managing small experimental theatres of their own. This amalgamation was carried out with brilliant success, but though to some extent the work of different groups was shared in London—for instance, Tyrone Guthrie, a West End producer of acknowledged talent, originally graduated from the Festival Theatre at Cambridge, and later took over the Old Vic, while Norman Marshall and Herbert Marshall (both directors of art theatres) came to produce several commercial plays in the West End—there was no attempt at unity of effort, as there was in Paris, because there was no single established theatre of any kind which might attract a strong feeling of allegiance and enthusiasm in a number of talented leaders.

It seems to me that this marked division between the commercial and the highbrow theatre is a great pity and should, if possible, be broken down after the war. Both theatres suffer from grave disadvantages and each could benefit from the other. In the art theatres, it is true, young actors and directors gain unique opportunities to make their mark. The performances are often brilliant in atmosphere and gain from the intimacy of their surroundings and simplicity of presentation, but, against this, progressive authors seem to fear and

distrust the West End theatre. They dread working with "star" actors. They will not take the risk of displeasing the pit and gallery; though, to do them justice, the commercial managers have not often smiled on experimental authors, shunning plays in verse, symbolical characters, political satire and choral interludes. And yet the ballet, with its continued infusion of modern ideas and music, choreography and decor—more advanced than anything the theatre has ever attempted—has already created for itself a big popular audience, of whom many of the most discriminating occupy the cheapest seats. The authors and directors, too, are led into bad habits by being associated too exclusively with the small art theatres. They develop affectations of taste and "theories" of acting. The players, too, neglect training in speech and movement, so that when they appear in a larger theatre they frequently make a poor effect. They are often encouraged to pursue to an exaggerated degree the cult of acting (much in vogue in the West End also during the 1920's, but now, fortunately, in disrepute) which tends to slipshod technique, a mania for throwing away lines and sentences and a terror of being "ham."

Of course, actors of to-day play, on the whole, better plays than their more transpontine forbears, who were brought up largely on fustian, with a rough grounding of Shakespeare and Old Comedy, interspersed with farce and pantomime—fine technical training, all the same. The ordinary commercial London successes are now regularly played, for years after their original productions, in repertories and tours throughout the country, and Chehov, Ibsen, Shaw, Strindberg and Pirandello have been acted successfully in many theatres both in London and the provinces. The taste of audiences has undoubtedly become more discriminating, and now, during the war, the enterprising tours undertaken by the Old Vic and other organisations are including a number of towns which are being visited for the first time for many years by good theatrical companies playing first-rate plays. This is a step forward and should be continued when London is safe once more. There is no question that provincial audiences appreciate plays and respond to good acting when they can get it, and the cinema has done good in so far as it has everywhere shown acting of a high standard, so that the third-rate copy of an old London performance is no longer tolerated.

A theatre is badly needed that shall be a focal point for the serious dramatic activity of the country. If possible, the same theatre should encourage modern authors and include their plays from time to time in a repertory (of which the backbone must include Shakespeare and Old Comedy) and successful authors must help by sacrificing some of their very big royalties in order to serve such a cause. How is such a theatre to be evolved? The Old Vic, with its fine existing standard and enterprising record, is obviously a better basis to start on than an excavated crater in South Kensington. But the Old Vic is severely handicapped financially. I have always urged that some amalgamation be brought about between the Vic and the Stratford Memorial Theatre, whose endowments and profits are, apparently, considerable—and whose standards, if I may say so quite impartially, fall considerably below those of the Vic and Wells. Two companies, or even three, controlled by a central board, and playing alternately throughout the year in London, Stratford and the other provincial cities, might well prove the ideal foundation of a new tradition in acting, directing and organisation. Actors engaged on yearly contracts, but forbidden to lend their time and talents for film or radio; directors encouraged to rehearse for from four to six weeks (the number of daily rehearsals offered to directors at Stratford has been as few as eight, with a gap of eight more between dress rehearsal and first performance!)—intensive technical planning and experiment and intelligent propaganda—these are unusual conditions in England, but surely not impossible of achievement.

The principal difficulty lies in the discovery of a skilled impresario to manage such a project. Actors and actor-managers must always plan to please themselves in the first place. A business manager must, of course, control the finances and supervise the details of showmanship—but the work remains to be mapped out and carried through under inspired leadership. In default of a single outstanding personality holding these qualifications, a theatre might be led, as in France, by a group of brilliant directors, if they could be persuaded to work constructively—both individually and collectively—in the service of such a theatre. Such a scheme would need long and careful planning, and now, while some of us are left improvising and marking time in the wartime theatre, is the time for us to prepare such a scheme, so that it may be ready to lay before the mass of theatre experts, actors and technicians, who will return, ready to start with fresh enthusiasm at the end of the war. But if any National Theatre scheme—call it what you will—is to receive the support of a really wide public, it is evident that it must be a new, living theatre, absolutely first class in its standard and equipment (at least as far as personnel is concerned), and that it must operate continually both in London and the provinces at the same time.

JOHN GIELGUD

THE NATIONAL GALLERY

A Whistler and Early Twentieth-century Oils is the arresting title of the latest exhibition at the National Gallery; there is also a collection of works by six painters in water colour. As for "A Whistler," which one had expected to be uncommonly large or striking, or both, it turns out to be a moderate-sized, mediocre riverscape, characteristic enough of that essentially second-rate artist. As for the "Early Twentieth-century Oils," they are not at all what one had hoped for. One had hoped to be shown works by the insufficiently known and under-rated painters of Camden Town, since they alone composed a group to be reckoned with at the beginning of the century. To be sure, their master, Sickert, is represented handsomely; we are shown seven paintings, two at least of which are choice examples of his subtle yet confident Venetian style. In fact, he is the mainstay of the show, and either his little picture *Resting* or *The Horses of St. Mark's* is doubtless the best thing here. Unfortunately, much of his contribution is already well known to gallery-goers; and the same must be said of the Steers, of which also there are seven. It was pleasant to see again that little landscape (No. 36), which was at the Tate, and Lord Howard de Walden's *Valley of the Terne;* but *The Domino,* though a novelty, is another disappointment. The fine free painting of the cloak, in the manner of Gainsborough, is charming, but why drag in the lady's head in such a way that one cannot ignore it? The lack of power and conviction in drawing, almost always revealed when this artist attempts to render a human countenance, is here made painfully apparent, and succeeds in marring, if not destroying, the general effect.

Of the rest not much need be said. The Conder—a surprise and a pleasant one—is as pretty as anything the artist ever did and rather less flimsy than most. The big drawing by Augustus John also was new to me, but I cannot pretend it was much of a pleasure. Presumably it is an early work, for the influence of Puvis de Chavannes is strong; it makes one realise that there have been worse draughtsmen than Clausen Puvis. Clausen always turns out to be a little better than one had supposed and Sargent a little worse. It will be difficult for the organisers to find an excuse for hanging *Bedtime,* by Frank Potter, since besides being an exceptionally feeble picture it is not of the period. *Sands at Dymchurch,* by Charles Sims, R.A.: upon my word, the Surrealists manage these things better.

The water-colourists make a fairer showing. Frances Hodgkins, Paul Nash and David Jones are three artists whose work deserves the honour of being exhibited in the National Gallery. But here again the organisers have been so unlucky as to choose pictures which, though by no means conspicuously fine examples of each painter's art, are conspicuous often by reason of their familiarity. Unless I mistake, the majority have been seen in public galleries or at dealers' during the last three or four years.

To be frank, many of the oil-paintings and some of the water-colours in this exhibition ought never to have passed the doors of the National Gallery. If modern pictures are to be admitted to this honour—and in present circumstances they certainly should be—we expect them to be of a quality which would, at the time they were painted, have distinguished them in the school to which they belong. Now in this collection of forty-five oil-paintings there are ten—I will name them if necessary—which would not have called for particular notice in any normal summer exhibition at Burlington House. That raises a question: Who is responsible? In principle, of course, responsibility for the organisation of exhibitions such as these would lie with the director, but Sir Kenneth Clark, as most people know, is doing other, and highly important, work. In his absence one would suppose the office might be put in commission. Surely there could have been no objection to appointing a representative and competent committee to take over the director's duties and appoint sub-committees to organise particular shows. At any rate, this is the National Gallery, and, though not quite so devout a believer in democracy as some of the more eminent contributors to this paper, I, as a ten shillings in the pound taxpayer, feel I have a right to ask: "Who is responsible?" Also, I have a right to an answer. The director, as we know, is serving the country elsewhere, and no one doubts that he is serving it well. Nevertheless, I cannot but wonder whether, if he were to return to his post, he would not be serving civilisation even better.

CLIVE BELL.

THE MOVIES

"Comrade X," at the Empire.
"Second Chorus," at the Plaza.
"Inspector Hornleigh Goes to It," at the New Gallery.
"Road Show," at the London Pavilion.

Stimulated perhaps by a recent debate in Parliament, the L.C.C. has stepped in to ban the latest Rosalind Russell film, so that *Married But Single* does not appear at the top of the above list. Conscience, somewhere, has been stirring. Apparently, the L.C.C. read a notice in a trade paper, inoffensive enough to the ordinary eye, they then rang up during the press view to say things must go no further, and (the case being urgent) decided to overrule the censorship and hold up the film. This proves that English hearts are where they should be. When the Nazis come to invade us they may be daunted by the fact that their adversaries are still capable of drawing a line in entertainment—"unsapped," I think, was the word used in the House of Commons.

But if the L.C.C. really wanted to make a gesture why did they pick on *Married but Single* and pass *Comrade X?* Quite a case could be made against *Comrade X*. So far as sexiness goes *Comrade X* does not lag behind. It provides revelations of a country where two strangers can walk into a bureau at one o'clock in the morning and marry by simply getting their cards changed; such a state of affairs, we will all agree, is demoralising. And the fact that one of the strangers is an American correspondent (Clark Gable), and the other Hedy Lamarr, seems to make matters worse. But the real case against *Comrade X* is that it will damage international relations. We may not know exactly where the U.S.S.R. stands with its two pacts—Jugoslavia in one hand and Japan in the other—but by showing *Comrade X* at this moment it would seem that we are taking a black view. If *The Mikado* once gave offence to the Japanese when they were our friends, *Comrade X* will surely result in Sir Stafford Cripps being driven out of Moscow irretrievably.

As satire *Comrade X* is lighthearted but ferocious. So few films of Russia have been made except by Communists that the problems of individual *Lebensraum*, Ogpu intrigue, party slogans and Old Russian lamentation, and the liquidation of officials by their successors, wear an aspect of novelty. *Ninotchka* fluttered the fringe of the subject with an infallible light touch. *Comrade X* has the disadvantage of coming after *Ninotchka*, and of attempting more and achieving less. It's never a quarter as convincing or half as funny as a story by Zoshchenko. However, its producer has had the idea of giving a Marx Brothers' view of Soviet life, and King Vidor and Ben Hecht have put some pep into it. A press Commissar is delivering an oration at the funeral of his predecessor who has "caught pneumonia," when the coffin lid rises and a bearded man shoots the orator in the hand; the pall-bearers begin to hurry and break into a run, the coffin breaks apart, the would-be assassin sprints into the distance. His next attempt is more successful (another "pneumonia case," it seems) and he reaches office. There are amusing scenes in vast government offices and uncomfortable tramcars. There is a very good wedding night when a lovely Comrade is converted from old-fashioned nightshirts to something more in the capitalist style. And finally the hero and heroine of the story escape from Russia in a tank followed by a hundred other tanks on manoeuvre. *Comrade X* is rich in horse-laughs of the kind no Englishman will be able to resist; it appeals to the Russophobe in all of us, and is, besides, independently funny. Clark Gable barges his way through as the Hemingway superman or subman with a story to write and rye on his breath; Hedy Lamarr, as a Communist tram-driver, is enchanting though orthodox, and so unconvincing that we swallow her conversion to "Boogie-Woogie" without a qualm. Felix Bressart gives his usual endearing portrayal of helplessness in company more black than Red.

The other new films aim at entertainment unsmudged by reality and there is not much to say about them except that they take no chances. Fred Astaire's charm is a certain winner; *Second Chorus* displays it well, provides a new partner in Paulette Goddard and an unexpected buddy in that good serious actor Charles Butterworth; unaccountably, though, Astaire isn't here dancer first and last, but is made to play a trumpet in a swing band. This lets in (for those who can stand it) Artie Shaw and his band. I must say that I prefer Astaire in the grip of choromania.

It is the saving of *Inspector Hornleigh Goes to It* that it doesn't take its detection seriously. The Inspector (Gordon Harker) and his assistant (Alastair Sim) go to it erratically, in the Army, in a dentist's surgery, in an evacuated boys' school, in the sorting van of an express—"it" being the pursuit of the Fifth Column. The funniest scenes are Harker taking a history-lesson in the boys' school and Sim irresistibly seduced by a pair of silk-stockinged legs. They deserve a better story than is provided here by Walter Forde (his *Saloon Bar* was far more ingeniously worked out), but lack of plot has been balanced by variety of incident. This pair of comedians is one of the rare comic successes in British films.

Road Show is nonsense about a lunatic asylum, a travelling fair, and Adolphe Menjou at his most avuncular. It manages to be funny without being clever, and is the only enjoyable slapstick film I have seen for months.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, April 19th—
- Bernard Newman: "The Balkans To-day," National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Lunch, Slaters, 142 Strand, 12-45. Tickets 3s. 6d.
- London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Maurice Miles, Queen's Hall, 2.30.
- James Gibb: "Music in the U.S.S.R.," 9 Fitzroy Square, W.1, 2.30.
- C. E. M. Joad: "Prospects of Civilisation," Friends' Meeting House, Hampstead, 3.
- Hampstead Relief Committee for Anti-Fascist Refugees, Recital by Maria Hlounova and George Knepler, 2 Keats Grove, N.W.3, 6.

SUNDAY, April 20th—
- K. B. Smellie: "Social Philosophy—Equality," 17 Manchester Street, W.1, 11.
- C. E. M. Joad: "Some Reflections on Religions," Conway Hall, 11.
- J. F. Horrabin: "New Order in Europe," 153 Finchley Road, N.W.3, 5.30.

MONDAY, April 21st—
- Fabian International Affairs Group Snack Lunch, Prof. K. Matsumoto: "The West and Japanese Development," 12 Great Newport Street, W.C.2, 1.

TUESDAY, April 22nd—
- Dr. W. A. Robson: "Relation of London Government to Post-War Reconstruction," Housing Centre, 13 Suffolk Street, S.W.1, 1.
- Edwin Evans: "Music," Morley College, 6.30.

THURSDAY, April 24th—
- Fabian Lunch, Terje Wold: "Norway's Fight," Royal Hotel, Upper Woburn Place, W.C.1, 1.
- H. Levy: "The English Contribution to Present Day Medicine," 36 Upper Park Road, N.W.3, 5.30.
- Circle of International Art Trio Recital, St. George's Church, Bloomsbury, 6.

FRIDAY, April 25th—
- N. B. L. Pevsner: "English Cathedrals—1275-1350," Birkbeck College, 5.
- Prof. G. Catlin: "Can We Unite with America?" 44 Gordon Square, W.C.1. Tickets, 1s. from Howard Fox, 37 Gower Street, W.C.1.

Correspondence

PARLIAMENT IN WARTIME

SIR,—It may seem strange, having regard to my political views, that I should write to THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. I am, however, a pretty constant reader of your journal.

I am hesitant about calling attention to the article of your Parliamentary Correspondent in your issue of April 5th as it contains a very friendly reference to Shinwell (with whom I am glad to have been associated on more than one occasion recently in advocating some particular project) and to me.

But I feel that I must state how entirely I agree with his general conclusions in regard to the functions of Parliament in time of war. Save for a weekly contemporary of yours, no other newspaper has put the matter so objectively. Among the 99 per cent. of members of the House of Commons who support the war are several who have held office in the past and many more who have special knowledge of the problems of to-day.

They should state their views boldly and frankly irrespective of whether they are or are not in agreement with the opinion expressed by the spokesman of the Government.

Yet what too frequently occurs is this. The Prime Minister, or some other leading member of the Government, makes a statement. Very often (though this does not apply to the Prime Minister's speeches) it is mainly read from a typewritten Departmental Brief. Afterwards a leading member of the Labour Party moves what in effect is a vote of thanks, which is seconded by a leading member of the Liberal Party, and supported by a leading Conservative. The effect is to empty the House for the rest of the Debate. The Minister (and who can blame him in such circumstances?) usually does not trouble to remain to answer any points for it. He leaves that task to his Under-Secretary, who may have an audience of fifteen—sometimes more, sometimes less.

Such a state of affairs destroys, at any rate temporarily, the character of the House as a Deliberative Assembly. It is a real misfortune that this should be so, for in general, partly as a result of events on the Continent, and partly on account of the magnificent oratory of the Prime Minister, there is, in the minds of the public, a greater store of goodwill towards and reliance upon the House of Commons than for many years past. WINTERTON

Stable Flat,
Shillinglee Park, Chiddingfold.

THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC AND A BY-ELECTION

SIR,—In the Battle of the Atlantic, as we have now twice been reminded by the Prime Minister, Ireland (or, for those who prefer Gaelic, "Eire") is in a position to give or to withhold assistance that may well be crucial. There are certain invaluable ports and aerodromes. But Ireland stands neutral—because, it is alleged, of the Partition of her island and, even more, because of the Nationalist minority in the partitioned area and because of the sorry plight to which it has been reduced. Partition might have been condoned—temporarily; but the treatment of that minority is not for a single minute either forgotten or forgiven in Ireland.

For many months now an Anglo-Irish and Irish group headed by General Sir Hubert Gough has been advocating Irish re-union as a basis or condition of a united Irish war effort. The main difficulty is that the initiative necessarily lies with Whitehall, and Whitehall will not move without Northern Ireland's consent. Northern Irish journals and spokesmen such as *The Belfast Newsletter* and the Rev. James Little, M.P., attack General Gough's proposals in unmeasured terms. "Oh, but," says General Gough in effect, "this is for the sake of the Empire, and of the Empire at war, in the very crisis of its fate. I thought loyalty to the Empire was your guiding motive." "We won't have it," reply the objectors. "But I know that amongst the Unionist majority in Northern Ireland there are others who think differently," says General Gough. And, behold, the event confirmed his words.

There was a by-election in North Down to fill the vacancy created by Lord Craigavon's death. The result was declared on Saturday, 29th March last. An independent Unionist candidate defeated the official Unionist Government candidate by a

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DENT

20 per cent. majority in spite of a special appeal to the electors by the Prime Minister, Mr. J. M. Andrews, to support him in view of the constitutional issue, in spite of the leading articles of *The Belfast Newsletter*, in spite of the Rev. James Little, M.P., who assured the electors that every vote given to the unofficial candidate "would be regarded by the enemies of Ulster" (*sic*) "as a vote for Irish reunion." Who speaks for Ulster now?

And so, possibly, a by-election may prove to have been a step towards winning the Battle of the Atlantic. It is clear that there are many Unionists in Northern Ireland who think much more of the safety and welfare of Britain and the Empire than of the local bitternesses which created Irish Partition. Will Whitehall take notice? Or will it let the golden opportunity slip? It has a serious responsibility in the matter. "GET ON WITH THE WAR."

London.

SUNDAY NIGHT POSTSCRIPT

SIR,—Take a *Punch* poem at its matiest, add a pinch of Kipling, season with Newbolt and the *Boys' Own Paper* and you have an A. P. Herbert postscript.

"So let us now salute the Greek
Who would not turn the other cheek."

Mr. Herbert so liked this couplet he gave it to the *Sunday Graphic* as well as the B.B.C. (probably *Punch* of the House of Commons will have profited as well by the time this letter appears).

However, I suppose if a few cranks representing at a liberal estimate 10 per cent. of the population can ban Sunday theatres in favour of Hollywood and B.B.C. music hall (Mr. Herbert incidentally was *not* one of the 10 per cent.), it is not illogical that Beverley Baxter and the Carlton Club are enough to get rid of J. B. Priestley. But it is an odd interpretation of "democracy." According to their own statistics, Mr. Priestley was easily the most popular Sunday night speaker the B.B.C. have yet produced. The vast majority of people I know, both in the army and outside, looked forward enthusiastically to his broadcasts. He expressed our hopes and our ideals, but not of course those of "big business" and the Conservative Association. Nor apparently those of the Labour leaders, since they have raised no protest at his dismissal. So once again the influential minority has won. Instead of an invigorating weekly talk on the problems, present and future, which beset us, we have Mr. Herbert and his flags. Better for morale? I doubt it. Just as I doubt whether I am a better Christian for listening to "Roll out the Barrel" rather than seeing *Hamlet* on Sunday afternoon.

Somewhere in Scotland. ARMY CAPTAIN

EDUCATION IN THE ARMY

SIR,—The correspondence in your columns, and also in those of certain other organs of the daily and weekly press, on Army Education, reveals a degree of misunderstanding which is probably due to a simple lack of information. As one of the Officers recently transferred into the new Army Educational Corps, I have had a certain amount of backstairs experience in running the scheme. As a result I have come to certain conclusions:

(i) The whole undertaking is conceived of, by those in authority, as a new species of Entertainment, if a decidedly superior one. Thus the main concern for the moment at any rate, is to get something going and not to worry very much what this something is all about. Certainly there is no clear conception of what might, from the point of view of those concerned with educational standards, be attempted and achieved. That the Army Educational Corps is now engaged—potentially—upon the largest scheme of adult education in the history of this country is probably not even known, let alone acted upon. In so far as there is anything specifically educational about the scheme, it takes the form of vocational training, designed to prepare and equip men for their post-war employment. That adult education could be something other than a cog in the commercial machine is not seriously considered.

(ii) In conformity with the view that Army Education is a new type of Army Entertainments, the voluntary principle is insisted upon. But if, as is sometimes claimed, the peculiar value of Army Education (as distinct from Entertainments) is that, by encouraging thought and discussion, it turns out a more efficient soldier, then there is obviously nothing to be said for making this activity voluntary; in fact, if the opinion is seriously held, it stands to reason that such Education should be made an integral part of training, and should be included in the normal training programme. By confiding educational activity to the men's leisure time, one is admitting its comparatively insignificant role in helping, ultimately, to win the war.

(iii) On the other hand, talks on Current Affairs constitute perhaps the largest part of the scheme. These are obviously to be welcomed from any point of view, at least so long as the "line" taken doesn't degenerate into the crudely propagandist. As far as the A.E.C., and the civilian authorities with whom it works, are concerned, there is an absolute minimum of censorship on speakers. But, and this is the point most commonly missed, a Commanding Officer has almost dictatorial powers of veto, and if he dislikes a speaker's views (usually his supposed views), may refuse to allow him into his unit. In fact one may safely say that the whole scheme depends upon the C.O.: if he is sympathetic it will flourish; if he "doesn't believe in education" then practically nothing will get a successful scheme working in his unit. On the whole, however, very few Commanding Officers are other than pleasantly helpful; as they say, "it all helps to keep the men interested and amused." And so long as the scheme remains fundamentally vague and unambitious, so long as any determined and enlightened ideas on higher education and morale (both of which might lead to the bogy of War Aims) don't raise their head, then all will be go smoothly and there won't be too many questions asked. And yet, until then, Army Education will continue to be merely a rival concern to ENSA.

DIVISIONAL EDUCATION OFFICER

SUNDAY THEATRES

SIR,—I entirely agree with Mr. Tom Harrisson when he writes concerning the recent sabbatarian dispute that "seldom has there been such an obvious case of difference between the mood of Parliament and people." I should say too that it is approximately true that 90 per cent. of the people never go to church except on special occasions. On account of this it is difficult to understand why apparently so many M.P.s should have feared losing the influence of the clergy. Perhaps it is because, lacking first-hand knowledge, they are still unaware of the present numerical weakness of the churches.

Personally I have always considered that there has always been a great deal of irrelevant discussion and argument at cross purposes over this question. In the first place it is well to remember that Sunday was *not* instituted as a holiday. Long before Christianity was recognised by the State it was instituted by Christians for Christians for the purpose of corporate worship. From the Christian point-of-view therefore the need for Sunday hinges upon the need for corporate worship. And I cannot see how the vast majority of people, having abandoned the churches, can be expected to observe the Christian Sunday.

I am not at all in sympathy with the Magnay school because I believe their attitude and methods do the churches nothing but harm. I confess that when I read of Mr. Magnay slapping his thigh and shouting "Hurrah!" I blushed for shame. Even in the day of their humiliation the churches still cling to that fatal old policy of coercion which has already helped to bring them so low.

Furthermore, this dispute breeds in the minds of many unthinking people the idea that the churches are in competition with the cinemas and theatres. My only comment on this is that if any of them are then they ought not to be. They should exist for a very different purpose.

I am equally out of sympathy, of course, with those who make the plea that the only time they get for pleasure is on a Sunday. A man once said to me, "I go out in my car on Sundays; it does me more good than going to church." One is driven to ask what connection there is between going to church and going for a car-ride. Our forefathers worked six long days a week and prayed nearly all day on Sunday. I am sure it is not desirable to go back to those days but people might as well be honest about their beliefs.

Sunday may always be retained as a weekly holiday and in that case Christians will be able to use it for their own purpose. But if it is ever lost it will only be fought for and recovered on religious grounds. H. W. LANGHAM

Cyncoed Methodist Church,
Westminster Crescent,
Cyncoed, Cardiff.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE return of Synge from Paris to Ireland is a dramatic moment in Anglo-Irish literature. In significance that journey is equalled only by the one made in the other direction by Joyce when he broke with Dublin for ever and went angrily to the Continent. The thing which fired Synge seemed to Joyce to be tarnished by the vulgarity of Edwardian Dublin. Unhappily the dates do not quite fit, but nevertheless one has a picture of those two figures, most self-contained and priest-like in their attitude to literature, passing each other without signals of recognition on their opposite journeys across the Irish Sea. Each is going to what the other has left: Joyce is on his way to become something like the Irish pedant and aesthete abroad, moving to that dilletantism which always seems to catch the Irishman in exile, turning him into a kind of cold Tara brooch in the shirt front of Western European culture; and Synge is on the way back to rub off some of the polish and to re-fertilise an imagination which was dying of civilisation. Such migrations, exile and return, are a master rhythm in Irish life. And yet, when one thinks about these journeys in connection with the work of Synge and Joyce, their destinations are not effectively so different after all. Both writers are sedulous linguists, lovers of a phrase who sport like dolphins in the riotous oceans of an English language which has something of the fabulous air of a foreign tongue for them. In the beginning was the word—if that is not the subject of their work, it is the exciting principle. There would even be no difficulty in citing parallel passages. I have no copy of *Ulysses* or *Finnegan* to hand, at the moment, but sentences from *The Playboy* like Christy's "Ah, you'll have a gallous jaunt, I'm saying, coaching out through limbo with my father's ghost," or

> And I must go back into my torment is it, or run off like a vagabond straying through the unions with the dust of August making mud-stains in the bullet of my throat; or the winds of March blowing on me till I'd take an oath I felt them making whistles of my ribs within

are three parts on the way to *Anna Livia*. And this passion for the bamboozling and baroque of rhetoric leaves both Synge and Joyce with a common emotion: an exhausted feeling of the evanescence of mere outward things, which is philosophical in Synge and, in Joyce, the very description of human consciousness. There is a common sense of the drunken interpenetration of myth or legend (or should we call it imagination and the inner life?) with outer reality. Where modern Europeans analysed, Synge and Joyce, heirs of an earlier culture, substituted metaphor and image. Again and again, in almost any page you turn to in Joyce and Synge, the tragedy or comedy of life is felt to be the tragedy or comedy of memory and the imagination. Their imagination transforms Christy, Pegeen, Deirdre, and Nora in *The Shadow of the Glen*; but when "the fine talk they have on them" is done, they are aware that time is writing on like a ledger clerk, that the beautiful girls will become old hags like the Widow Quin or Mrs. Bloom grunting among her memories on the chamber pot. Time dissolves the lonely legendary mind of man, killing the spells of the heart, draining the eloquence of the body—that seems to be not only the subject of Synge's *Deirdre* and all his plays, but the fundamental subject of Anglo-Irish literature.

Reading Synge again in the new and excellent Everyman edition* which contains all the plays and prefaces, the verses he published in 1908 and extracts from his prose work on the Aran Islands, one feels all the old excitement of his genius. Nothing has faded. He reads as well as an Elizabethan. In his short creative period all Synge's qualities were brought to a high pitch of intensity and richness and his work stands inviolable in a world apart. It is unaffected by the passing of the fashion for peasant drama, for behind the peasant addict with his ear to the chink in the wall, is the intellect of the European tradition, something of Jonson's grain and gusto. Synge was a master who came to his material at what is perhaps the ripest moment for an artist—the brink of decadence. The Gaelic world was sinking like a ship; and there was an enlightened desperation in the way the Anglo-Irish caught at that last moment, before their own extinction too. That, anyway, is how it looks now. The preoccupation with the solitude of man, with illusion and with the evanescence of life in Synge and Joyce is, I rather think, one of the signs that the old age of a culture has come, and Synge gives to the death of the Gaelic world the nobility and richness of a ritual. It is not, as in the Aran journal, a ritual of sparse sad words, but the festive blaze of life.

It is common in the eulogies of Synge to say that the unfinished *Deirdre of the Sorrows* hints at the heights to which Synge's genius might have attained. For me *Deirdre* marks a dubious phase in his development. Even when I allow for the blind spot which English taste has in the matter of legendary or mythological subjects, I cannot help noting that, in attempting *Deirdre* Synge put himself into a literary straitjacket and went back on the sound opinions he gave in his prefaces to the plays and poems. No doubt anyone who knew Yeats at that time was simply ordered into the Celtic twilight and had to take his dose of it; and one cannot help feeling that Synge would have had the sanity to return to the doctrine he set out in the preface to *Tinker's Wedding*:

> Of the things which nourish the imagination humour is one of the most useful, and it is dangerous to limit or destroy it.

More important:

> I have often thought that at the side of the poetic diction which everyone condemns, modern verse contains a great deal of poetic material, using poetry in the same special sense. The poetry of exaltation will be always the highest; but when men lose their poetic feelings for ordinary life and cannot write poetry of ordinary things, their exalted poetry is likely to lose its strength of exaltation, in the way men cease to build beautiful churches when they have lost happiness in building shops.

And more important still, these words from the introduction to his book of poems and translations:

> The drama is made serious—in the French sense of the word—not by the degree in which it is taken up with problems that are serious in themselves, but by the degree in which it gives nourishment, not very easy to define, on which our imaginations live.

So *Riders to the Sea* seems to me great tragedy, but *Deirdre* to be simply poetic material for tragedy where Synge's genius moves stiffly.

Like the Russians in the 70's, Synge "returned to the people" when he went to Aran. Unlike the Russians he does not seem to have felt any mystical faith in doing this, and knew quite well that the heroic, primitive life of the West was doomed. There is always the sensation in Synge's work of being one of the last men on earth, the survivor of a dying family. One feels the loneliness of men and women in a lonely scene, and one is also made to feel the personal, inaccessible loneliness of Synge himself. At the back of the plays there is, for all his insistence on the necessity of joy and feasting in the theatre, a dark and rather *fin de siècle* shadow, and there is more than a hint, in the character of the Playboy, of the art-for-art's-sake artist of the 90's who lives only in words and illusions. Joyce's legendary Dublin is, in a sense, the answer to Synge's legendary West. *Ulysses* is an assertion that modern urban man can have his myth and Joyce's "ordinary men" are the sort of "ordinary men" whom Synge would have found lifeless. Synge was too soon to see the enormous contribution of the American vernacular to popular culture in the towns, and too cut off from knowledge of urban people to know what resources common urban speech had. Nowadays (and without mistaking courage for the Heroic pattern of living) we can discern the new heroic status of cities in their Aeschylean devastation and their curious mass stoicism. Cities seem now to have become greater, in this sense, than individual men.

In one obvious way Synge does belong to an earlier world than ours, and that is in his humour. It is the strong, rather cruel corporeal and baroque humour of knavery, tricks and cunning. We have almost entirely lost the literature of roguery, the life of which has been prolonged in Ireland by the tradition of disrespect for foreign law. To his handling of roguery, Synge brought all the subtlety he had learned from Molière. This has, of course, often been said and it stands out a mile in his handling of the dramatist's use of continual contrast, whereby almost every speech creates a new situation. There is no falsity in his farces; one does not feel that the situation is an artificial one. How easily *The Playboy* could have become an Aldwych farce; and yet how easily Synge makes us accept his preposterous idea, by trying it first upon the main character before our eyes. The texture of his drama is a continuous interweaving of challenge and riposte, a continuous changing of the threads in a single motif; so that we are involved in far more than a mere anecdote which has a jerk of astonishment in the beginning and a sting in the tail at the end. At the height of farce we may instantly, by a quick shift of focus, be faced by that sense of the evanescence of life which is Synge's especially, or we may be jogged by the sharp elbow of mortality. And as a piece of music will start on two or three plain notes before its theme is given a head, so these plays start in the simple household accents and come with an equal domesticity to their end. The old man having got rid of his wife, changes his tone and calls for the drink, the tinkers escape from the curse of the priest to their old life on the roads, Pegeen is left to clear up at the inn, the blind whom the saint has healed get back their blindness. All are ordinary people once more, leaving us (as the comic genius does) to eye each other with new, unholy expectation, warming us with the love of human antics, fattening our thin wits, so that like Sir Mammon in *The Alchemist* we cry out as we put the book down, "Oh, my voluptuous mind!"

V. S. PRITCHETT

* *Plays, Poems and Prose.* By J. M. Synge. Introduction by Ernest Rhys. Everyman Library. 2s. 6d.

SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare. By MARK VAN DOREN. *Allen and Unwin.* 12s. 6d.

Mr. Van Doren is an intuitional critic. Punctiliously, he admits in his introduction debts to the accepted writers on Shakespeare. But I feel that he still owes a debt to himself: if he has read much, he has discarded much. In the main, he appears to start from scratch, and this gives his observations a virtue one must respect. His style, plain, concrete, innocent of inflations, seems equally innocent of derived thought. His *Shakespeare* arrives from America at precisely the moment when our part of the Old World hopes to hope most of the New, and the Van Doren human directness and lack of nonsense appears to warrant and to confirm the hope. The impression of freshness is so strong, one might say that the plays of Shakespeare, for the first time published, had reached a reviewer working in good faith. "Reviewer" is perhaps misleading: Mr. Van Doren shows the poet's traditional sensibility—a sensibility that does not function to order, whose only imperative is experience. That the reading and

rereading of Shakespeare plays has done something to Mr. Van Doren one cannot doubt. His impressions—as he says in his Introduction—are of the study rather than of the theatre, and possibly, in some of his friendly quarrels with Shakespeare, he ignores the enormous *x* of theatre-craft. The 100 per cent. playability of almost all of the plays must account for elements in them that seem to this critic adverse or forced, or even (though he does not use the word) on the phoney side. Actually, I believe it is impossible to see Shakespeare played without some sort of shock, some disruption of the subjective image that had already formed in the reader's mind. The unread audience—for whom the plays were intended—are less liable to the effects of blast.

Mr. Van Doren's preoccupation is with the poet. His introduction advances no governing theory, and the succeeding discussions are, in consequence, free. They are so free as to give, at their less fortunate moments, the impression of being random and *ad hoc*. The reader is left to assemble Mr. Van Doren's conclusions, and inevitably, by the end of the book, much that was of too independent merit tends to drop from the mind. The accepted chronology of the plays has been followed: the criticism attempts to describe an arc inside the arc of the poet's powers. The suggestion towards the end is not of decline, but that Shakespeare re-entered, after the height of the tragedies, a second, now adult, phase of superb virtuosity in the writing of the "romantic" plays. The by now almost careless perfection of the sheer play-form permitted, according to Mr. Van Doren, a finer, more personal point to the poetry. Human probability—he contends—lessened, as though in the tragedies it had exhausted itself.

Throughout, there is the approach to the timeless phenomenon. If Shakespeare's Elizabethanism is not, to Mr. Van Doren, wholly irrelevant, it is, as he says at the outset, immaterial enough to discount. The contribution of Shakespeare's own time and its manners towards the creation of Shakespeare's absolute world was, in Mr. Van Doren's view, superficial. And he rules out, as an element, social thought—in fact, thought in almost any deliberate sense. "The great and central virtue of Shakespeare was not achieved by taking thought, for thought cannot create a world." The suggestion is, that Shakespeare was more tentative than he knew, and that he was feeling his way towards inherent perfection by a not conscious process of hit-and-miss. In the poems (the subject of the first essay), Mr. Van Doren points out, the subjects are constantly overshot; the drop to the context—he instances weak closing couplets of sonnets—seems at once reluctant and arbitrary: in effect, the sonnets consume themselves. The Shakespeare of the sonnets, says Mr. Van Doren, never more than departed from the idea of personal love: he had only one love, his own poetry. And the critic's reading of the first seven plays shows Shakespeare not yet abreast of his own power. There is a conception of genius as possible enemy—so that the picture of Jacob wrestling with the Angel is brought immediately to the mind. It is, by this showing, from *Romeo and Juliet* onwards that the plays assimilate, as well as generate, poetry. From then on, Shakespeare more than lights up his successive subjects; he penetrates, and is penetrated, by them. It is from then on that Mr. Van Doren traces the steady, though not uninterrupted, ascent. The plays would appear, to this critic, to differ in quality not in their mould or colour but from their having been fired in a furnace of varying heat.

If Mr. Van Doren denies Shakespeare thought (in the sense of effort) he does not deny him method. But the method is little, and then unacademically, discussed. It is the extant, achieved Shakespearean world that interests him, even when, at the start, the world shows lacunae and pits and mists. Once this main attachment of the critic's interest appears, the essays gain value through continuity. There are recurrences to the themes of will and pride, also, to conflict, social as much as spiritual, to the position of characters at odds with what, in the essay on *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Mr. Van Doren first calls "the gentlemen's world" of the comedies—sweet surfeit, imperturbable stylishness, inherited ruthless gracefulness. Malvolio, Shylock, in his own way Angelo—this gentlemen's world creates its buffoons and victims, but such people are its disturbers, too. Their defeats are not conclusive; after their exits they are found to have acted like death's little pin. Though, only with *Othello* is this particular conflict elevated to tragedy. Apart from these figures, Mr. Van Doren emphasises the enormous power of mistrust, the check on action, the sinister inverse of the apparently sound will. Above all, he is to show that this is a world of mirrors—active or impotent, sane or mad, its giant characters are at every moment self-seen. As for Shakespeare's women (other than the "wailing women") Mr. Van Doren chiefly commends the shrewdness behind their *jeux d'esprit*.

Sir Hugh Walpole, in his Foreword, says he considers Mr. Van Doren is at his best when writing of the less well-known plays. Clearly these give more scope. At the same time, the essays on *Othello* and *Antony and Cleopatra* seem to me outstanding: they show feeling and force.

ELIZABETH BOWEN

BEHIND THE LINES

Scorched Earth. By EDGAR SNOW. *Gollancz.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China* was a revelation to thousands of English people who knew nothing of the internal struggles of China. *Scorched Earth*, which is largely a report of Mr. Snow's journeys in China since the Japanese captured Pekin in 1937, has the same vivid qualities, but cannot, in the nature of things, prove as exciting as its predecessor. But its value is great. Mr. Snow is no mere spectator: he has shared the life of China, and he has an equally intimate understanding both of the problems of Chungking and of the "Communist" areas.

The introductory chapters describing his exit from Peking remind us that the surface indications of passivity often hide a determined resistance to Japan's occupation. Edgar Snow introduces us to General Sung Cheh-yuan, the last non-puppet Chinese to rule Peking who "had his own deceits, which were always a little ahead of the Japanese, whom he treated with such unfailing courtesy and respect." General Sung Cheh-yuan, "a gentleman and a rascal," was one of the most expert of the Chinese political shadow-boxers. After two years, Japan's army intriguers were less firmly established in Hopei-Chahar than when they put him in office as Chairman of the Political Council under the delusion that he could be "managed." He collected round him a number of patriotic, energetic young men, and if they became impatient with his game of bluff, he would produce a Confucian quotation on filial piety, and, put on the spot himself, he went off to "sweep the tombs of his ancestors." The Japanese with all their efficiency have no weapon with which to counter such a character. Nor can they defeat the Chinese peasant who, on returning to his house, finds nothing there, but comments cheerfully, "The land is still there and the mud is still there."

But Edgar Snow is no sentimentalist. He describes the resistance of the Kuomintang bureaucracy to that development of a people's movement without which this war on two fronts would have been lost long ago, and the gradual realisation, often under Communist pressure, of the need for mass education and training in political and economic democracy. And he has some very bitter comments to make on the rich merchants and others who, pommaded and silk-gowned, "wiggled back and forth" across the Shanghai dance-floors "highly pleased with themselves," while their fellow countrymen were dying in thousands on the battlefield. This Chinese "colonial" product of foreign-ruled Shanghai he describes as "the most degenerate bourgeois on earth"; the China war, he adds, would be pointless if "it did not include the purpose of destroying the last gangster power of this city over the country."

With this contemptible minority Edgar Snow contrasts the self-respect which the Chinese people have developed, born of their pride in having withstood the war machine of Japan. How, he asks, do they rationalise the probability of death? The Japanese is armoured with Buddhist amulets and thousand-stitch belts and believes that he will be reborn a higher god. The Christian dies believing in salvation. The Mahomedan is confident about the Prophet's paradise to come. But the Chinese wears no charms, has no confessor and Confucius promises him nothing. Perhaps this is one of the secrets of his self-reliance.

We learn very little more about the centre of the Communist area than we learnt with such excitement in *Red Star Over China*. There are more students, many new institutions, and a new Professor Hsi Hsu-hai with hybrid notions of harmony and orchestration who invents musical instruments from Standard Oil tins strung with local gut, and a Women's University where 400 girls and women were learning everything from spinning and the care of infants to the complexities of English and Russian grammar. His description of the New Fourth Army makes Chiang Kai-shek's dispersal of it seem even more regrettable. It was formed in January, 1938, and has carried on guerilla activities ever since on the north and south banks of the Yangtse. Its strength has been based on its system of "political indoctrination." "War," says its Commander, Han Ying, who is still under arrest, "is a continuation of politics. . . . Political leadership guarantees the spirit of a revolutionary army, its thought, its life and its action." The same principle of mass organisation is applied in the areas under the Border Governments which provide the peasants "with the ablest and the most democratic administration they have ever known."

Probably the most interesting section of the book is the story of China's Industrial Co-operative Movement. Edgar Snow is a brilliant reporter and here is the "big story" of China behind the lines. He was in it from the beginning, and he and his wife were behind the scenes when the British Ambassador presented the scheme to General and Madame Chiang Kai-shek. Rewi Alley (to whom the book is dedicated), a New Zealander with a heritage of Irish blood, is hero No. 1 in China's Industrial Co-operative Movement. "Where Lawrence brought to the Arabs the destructive technique of guerilla war," Edgar Snow says, "Alley was to bring to China the constructive technique of guerilla industry." The idea has captured the imagination of this intensely practical people, and the setting up of small industries—there are now about 20,000 co-operatives scattered all over the country—is one of the most important developments of the war. Many Americans out there he tells us "now believe that the best way to prevent Japan from engulfing world markets with Chinese "rice-labour" goods . . . is to support co-operative production to back up resistance in China.

The last part of *Scorched Earth* is an appeal directed to the American public, but much of it would equally well apply to us.

"It seems to me urgent," he says, "that the

United States voluntarily abrogate her present unequal treaties with China. It is essential to renounce extraterritoriality and all remaining special privileges which we claim. . . . It should cover all our special rights in Manchuria and Mongolia as well. . . . In place of the former unequal treaties we should negotiate an entirely new treaty with China on a basis of full equality and reciprocity.

He suggests that America should follow this up by a "Pact of Democracy" with Britain and the British Empire and with Russia. In this way, he suggests, the process of ending imperialism in China might be started and the Axis in Asia disarmed. Edgar Snow's reflections then take him far beyond the frontiers of China. Like many others who have championed the "popular front" and found themselves in the dilemma of all good democrats who cannot go all the way with the Communists and who yet see that Socialism is the answer to Fascism, he begins to build in his mind the structure of the world which might be if the democratic Powers in victory would leap beyond imperialism into internationalism. Whether or not his political speculations are *Realpolitik* or wishful thinking is a question that applies to a wider area than Asia.

DOROTHY WOODMAN

DETECTION

Surfeit of Lampreys. By NGAIO MARSH. *Collins.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Road to Folly. By LESLIE FORD. *Collins.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Hangman's Whip. By M. G. EBERHART. *Collins.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Man Who Could Not Shudder. By JOHN DICKSON CARR. *Hamish Hamilton.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

And so to Murder. By CARTER DICKSON. *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Murder at Liberty Hall. By ALAN CLUTTON-BROCK. *Lane.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Where There's a Will. By REX STOUT. *Collins.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Holiday Homicide. By RUFUS KING. *Methuen.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Case of the Baited Hook. By ERLE STANLEY GARDNER. *Cassell.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The level of detection here is remarkably high. It is quite an event for a reviewer to find nine books in a row entitled to recommendation without compunction. Where all are so deserving it would be invidious to attempt an order of merit, so I shall take the ladies first.

The first three books in the list are perfect instances of the feminine approach to murder. It is not the methods of crime or the reasons for crime that stimulate a woman's imagination, but its emotional possibilities—such as the anxiety of talking to someone who may be intending to kill you, or the heightened sex appeal of the male for a frightened female, or, especially, the delicious uncertainty whether a man's attentions are amorous or murderous. These are the tools every authoress feels she can handle—and so she can! As long as Miss Marsh, Miss Ford and Mrs. Eberhart are subjecting their heroines to one fearful experience after another they are in their element—wallowing in their element almost. Only when they emerge to face the dreary business of providing motives and adjusting timetables do you feel them picking their way barefooted over gravel. No wonder if occasionally a bit of grit gets into the works.

In *Surfeit of Lampreys* a nice, practical New Zealand girl on her first visit to England is invited to stay at their London flat by the upper class, ne'erdowell but above all charming, family of Lord Charles Lamprey. It is a time of family financial crisis—it generally is—and a rich uncle is being expected to stump up to get them out of the soup. On the contrary the uncle stumps down, and the Lamprey family are left more in

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the soup than ever with a peculiarly savage murder to explain on their premises. The Lamprey family are so charming that they must be related to the Wimseys; and they even take the shine off old friend Chief Inspector Alleyn. Roberta Grey, the New Zealander, has a hard head, but oh! such a soft heart, and what a sense of smell! (When Alleyn stood above her "she noticed that he smelt pleasantly. Something like a new book in a good binding.") As for the crime (it's a brave reader who would suspect a Lamprey) the working out of its ingenious mechanics must have given Miss Marsh a lot of trouble, so by the time she reached the so-called motive she must have been exhausted. The popular success of *Surfeit of Lampreys* is inevitable and it will be difficult for Miss Marsh to improve on her technique.

Next heroine is a Northerner on a visit to South Carolina, where the grey Spanish moss festoons from the live oaks and death is the only release from marriage. Small wonder then that South Carolina enjoys a high death rate. Miss Ford makes the most of the moss, the divorce laws and the charm of the "deep South." The victim who took the *Road to Folly* is a predatory worldly woman from the North with whom no one can sympathise. The motive is admirable; and we can extend our admiration to the villain, whose behaviour is faultless to the bitter end.

"Search" is the name chosen for her heroine by Mrs. Eberhart. I can't say I care for it, but it seems to convey some of the deep vibrating heart-throbs *The Hangman's Whip* has in store for her. The love interest is paramount in the Eberhart world, but the heroines only get their men after excruciating anxiety. Search spends a few chapters waiting to be thrown out of a top story window in Chicago. The plot is the usual Eberhart tragedy of errors, while the motive would be splendid if it were credible. The villain is nicely muffled.

To rest our emotions let us turn to Carter Dickson, or if you prefer, John Dickson Carr. This double-barrelled author brings down a right and left in *The Man Who Could Not Shudder* and *And So To Murder*, as neat a couple of trick murders as even he has ever devised. *The Man Who Could Not Shudder* is the more mechanically ingenious, but the penalty of such technical virtuosity has to be paid when the mechanism is explained. Conjurers know well how inevitably tedious is the explanation of a conjuring trick, however brilliant the trick. In fact the greater the previous deception, the flatter must be the process of undeception. The purport of this particular trick is how to shoot a man with a pistol hanging from a nail on a solid wall, when you yourself are in the next room. If you already know how, you needn't open this book. If you don't you'll find out on p. 248. But even that does not reveal who actuated the mechanism. A very unpleasant man was shot; almost every one who disliked him was in the next room; so any one could have done it. Actually it is *the last person you would suspect*—and I mean it.

And So To Murder is less provokingly ingenious and more amusing, especially if you prefer to have your mysteries solved by Sir Henry Merivale rather than Dr. Fell. A sweet young lady novelist, trying to write scenarios, is the victim of a dastardly series of attempts on her life at a film studio. In this case it is the ingenuity of motive, not of actual murder, for which we must admire Carter Dickson or, if you prefer, Dickson Carr. Incidentally, it is interesting to compare the male and the female handling of terror. The lady novelist is alone in an empty house with a potential murderer padding in the room overhead. Carter Dickson gives her gooseflesh four brisk pages, whereas any one of our authoresses would give it at least two chapters.

Mr. Clutton-Brock is the only newcomer to detection in the list and his *Murder at Liberty Hall* stands up well in this distinguished company of seasoned professionals. Liberty Hall is a spirited satire on one of these modern co-educational schools where the children do the teaching and the teachers the learning. There is a delightful cricket match between "Liberty Hall" and a minor public school, from which Mr. Clutton-Brock extracts considerable amusement for every ball bowled. One of the staff of Liberty Hall is poisoned at a bottle party. Anyone present could have poisoned the sherry, so the solution depends on motive, and for that Mr. Clutton-Brock has borrowed a magnificent idea from the armoury of poetic justice. The style is fluent and scholarly, as if Mr. Clutton-Brock had been writing novels for the intelligentsia all his life.

Nero Wolfe is no favourite of mine, but his solution of *Where There's a Will* is a remarkable process of deduction for which he deserves all credit. Mr. Stout is a relentless wise-cracker and Archie Goodwin would indeed be a pitiful compère to Wolfe's shows if he didn't raise an occasional laugh. (But once you laugh with a wise-cracker you're lost, you will never recover your face again. It is as insidious as dram-drinking or chocolate-munching.) As the title suggests, the plot hinges on a murdered millionaire's will with some bizarre provisions. There is plenty of excitement, plenty of action, another murder and a perfectly logical but unexpected *dénouement*.

Holiday Homicide is another of the wise-cracking American style; fast, exciting, with a sound solution—oddly enough in fact the *same* solution as *Where There's a Will*. But one can't expect too much variety from the American assembly lines. And the same goes for the Perry Mason. *The Case of the Baited Hook* passed the standard gauge of all the previous Perry Masons, no better, no worse, no different.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

THE COSMOS

The Birth and Death of the Sun. By GEORGE GAMOW, Professor of Theoretical Physics, George Washington University. *Macmillan.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Man lives on sunlight. Sunlight will in due season, and in the twinkling of an eye, destroy him. For some day the sun will blaze into the *nova* state, and in a few seconds man with all his works and the little planet that mothered him will be reduced to flame. It is not known whether he will be spared yet for thousands of millions of years, or whether the end will be over before I have finished writing this sentence. Such is the upshot of this latest bulletin from the astronomical front.

Meanwhile Earth spins smoothly on, and man is in the throes of the greatest crisis of his adolescence. As I write, the house shakes with the racket of his internecine conflict. Some say that in this time of struggle astronomy is irrelevant, is sheer escapism. No! The aim of the struggle is to make possible a fuller measure of developed human life for all men; and fuller human life involves more appropriate adjustment to the environment. Even the widest, the cosmical environment must be taken into account. Our social aims must not be insulated from our background of cosmological knowledge. If we base our moral and political sanctions on some falsely comforting cosmology of endless progress, sooner or later we shall be disillusioned and morally disorientated. But if, in spite of all, we can still will to make our planet, while it lasts, a true vessel of the spirit, nothing can shake us.

Professor Gamow does not claim it as an established fact that the sun will some day explode, but in view of the latest evidence this seems probable. He should know, for his book makes it clear that he himself is a leading pioneer in astro-physics. But though he reports the very latest discoveries and theories, he writes for the layman. Even in the four excellent chapters on subatomic phenomena he refrains from mathematics. He succeeds in giving the gist of the most difficult ideas and such complicated inventions as the cyclotron largely by apt analogy and forceful diagrams. (But why draw the blackboard as well as the graph?)

The book deals with the birth and death not only of the sun but of the whole cosmos. About two "billion" years ago (American for two thousand million) the cosmos was a dense hot gas. If it was finite it was not more than ten times bigger than our solar system, but perhaps it was infinite though expanding! Anyhow, as it expanded, the gas split apart into great clouds, each of which sooner or later condensed till it became a single star. While the young stars were still crowded together they often collided, and more often had near misses. From this intercourse arose probably a wealth of planetary systems, far more than formerly seemed possible. And, of course, on a fair proportion of the planets there may well be intelligent life. The further expansion of the cosmos split up the cosmical cloud of stars and gas into the many millions of galaxies, each one a "universe," some 100,000 light years in diameter, and by now about ten times that distance from its nearest neighbours. The galaxies continue to rush apart. The more remote are already beyond the reach of our greatest telescopes. Meanwhile the stars live out their age-long phases. As they shrink they grow hotter. The sun grows steadily hotter. Earth's climate must in the long run become too torrid for life. But probably the more dramatic disaster will intervene before that date, for probably every star at some point in its career becomes a *nova*. Afterwards it is a minute but brilliant "white dwarf," steadily cooling, till at last it radiates no longer. Ten "billion" years hence all the stars will be dead or dying.

And then? And in the beginning, whence the initial concentrated gas-cloud?

OLAF STAPLEDON

HORACE IN ENGLISH

Translations from Horace, Juvenal and Montaigne. By R. C. TREVELYAN. *Cambridge University Press.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Odes of Horace. Translated by EDWARD MARSH. *Macmillan.* 6*s.*

All translation involves adjustments and compromises. To give the mere sense of your author is one thing; to convey his tone and atmosphere is another; and the two duties constantly conflict. This difficulty is perhaps as keenly felt with Horace as with any author that ever lived. In his Odes—apart from those which were obviously done to order—everything depends on a subtle magic in the phrasing and on the art—most delicately concealed—in the "Aeolian modes" which he has transferred to Italy. In the Satires and Epistles the problem is different—it is to catch the colloquial note without losing the charm which the pedestrian muse rarely fails to carry.

Here, I think, Mr. Trevelyan, misled by his recent success with Lucretius, has failed. He has chosen, for the most part, blank verse; and this, to my mind, is almost the last measure he ought to have selected. It may be that Pope's imitations have too firmly established themselves in one's mind—aided as they have been by Conington's versions—but it seems to me that the iambic couplet reproduces Horace as nearly as possible; and blank verse, even though Mr. Trevelyan allows himself all possible licences, fails to give English readers (and "translations are for those who cannot read the original") a due

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notion of Horace's style. Some of these licences, indeed, seem almost too free. Thus, for example:

> But if the populace of Rome should ask me
> Why, though I use the same colonnades as they,
> My opinions are not the same, and why
> I neither follow nor avoid whatever
> They themselves love or hate;

or this, as a specimen of unrhymed fourteen syllable verse,

> Whom should we meet
> But Fuscus Aristines, a dear friend of mine,
> Who knew the man
> Only too well! We halt. "Where do you come from! Where are you going?"

Mr. Trevelyan seems to have gone back to the methods of Hall and Donne, who thought that satire demanded roughness of metre. That he is wrong is, I think, clearly shown by the fact that though Juvenal's style is totally different from Horace's, he translates "Quamvis digressu" in the same fashion as "Si raro scribis."

But enough of all this, which may well be mistaken. On the rest of the volume there can be little dispute. It contains versions of two essays of Montaigne, in which the errors of Florio are corrected, and, rightly, modern English is used; for there was nothing quaint or old-world in Montaigne when his essays first appeared. The Elizabethan flavour of Florio is delightful but deceptive. I have taken down my old copy of Florio and compared some pages with Mr. Trevelyan's, to the advantage of the latter.

Still more charming are two dialogues, suggested by the main subject of the book. One is between Horace and Tibullus, in which the characters and ideas of these so different friends are admirably brought out—in which, for instance, the total absence of anything we mean by poetry in the *Ars Poetica* is clearly shown, and Horace's strange depreciation of Catullus is well contrasted with what we may be sure was Tibullus's feeling. The other is between Horace and Maecenas, excellent both in what it expresses and in what it hints. Here is the statesman's well-known terror of death ("Vita dum superest, bene est"), and here is his mingled love and hatred of his wife Terentia. Both these little pieces will appeal equally to the scholar and to the "common reader."

Sir Edward Marsh's task is even harder than Mr. Trevelyan's. To translate an ode or two may be a possible miracle, though even Milton did not quite succeed with the curiously felicitous one he chose. To translate all is beyond the most thaumaturgic of poets, and the path of those who have tried to do so is strewn with failures. Yet one cannot regret that Sir Edward has made the attempt. His versions often illuminate the most familiar Odes, and he is always interesting and sometimes as felicitous as anyone can hope to be. Thus the famous "simplex munditiis"—plain in thy neatness—which he rightly calls impregnable to frontal attack—he paraphrases into "that easy miracle of curling gold"; and I do not think anyone is likely ever to do it better.

His modesty, shown both in his preface and in his occasional notes, is particularly pleasing. Sometimes it is quite superfluous. He tells us he has consulted no commentators but Page and Wickham. These, surely, are quite enough for anybody but a Dryasdust: and, when they are supplemented by a reminiscence of Verrall's conjectures, they are more than sufficient for Sir Edward's purposes. The Ode to Lamia, unintelligible as an address to a great noble, becomes simple when taken as an ironic note to a slave—though, as Sir Edward rightly says, the irony is not in the best taste. He is indeed never afraid to point out where, in his opinion, Horace nods, or where, possibly, some somnolent copyist has nodded for him. He will have nothing to do with that strange stanza about Carthage which Bentley held to be a monkish insertion, and as for the lines in which Horace wonders why the Rhaetians armed their hands with Amazonian axes, he dubs them ridiculous, and says it is only kind to omit them. But there are two or three whole Odes which a similar kindness might have left out.

One trivial detail. Is *Prince* Hannibal in II 12 a misprint for *fierce*? The Latin is *dirum*, and the dread of Hannibal remained with the Romans for centuries.

E. E. KELLETT

PEN TO PLOUGH

Wessex Wins. By A. G. STREET. *Faber.* 8s. 6d.

Even before the Nazi blockade reminded us that food comes from the land and not from tins, an increasing minority had begun to think of the English countryside as something more than a stretch of verdure to be viewed through the side-windows of "the car." There were townsmen who had learnt to see beauty in furrows as well as fells, craftsmanship in hedging and rick-building no less than in fancy ironwork and handwoven ties, and some other function for a farm besides the provision of cream teas and camping-sites. For this advance in popular enlightenment we owe nothing to the political parties, a little to the educational authorities, and a very great deal to a handful of authors, among whom Mr. Adrian Bell was perhaps the pioneer and Mr. A. G. Street has become the most famous.

Mr. Street steps naturally into first place. Unlike the others, he is a farmer by birth, working the acres his father worked before him; also, besides being a novelist, he has proved himself a prolific journalist and broadcaster, thus winning national attention for his ideas. It was inevitable that sooner or later his public would demand the present book, which tells how he came to do all this; for, while schoolmasters and doctors and architects may take up writing without any inquiry into their past, an articulate agriculturist is so near to being a unique phenomenon that he challenges belief.

Here then is the awaited story: of how Mr. Street, a respectable Wessex farmer of forty, was plunged into authorship; wrote his first article in response to a conjugal gibe; saw it printed in the *Daily Mail*; and was started on the lane which led him, with very few windings or hard patches, to Faber's, Broadcasting House, Alexandra Palace, and other delectable destinations. Some would say he had been exceptionally lucky: there are no tragic disappointments here, no years of poverty sustained by love and faith. From the appearance of his first book he was a consistent success, and that book was itself commissioned—oh, dream of aspiring authors!—when it was only one-third written. But it was not luck. Mr. Street had held his fire twenty years after most men let off their first broadside: when his guns did open, they had accumulated ammunition which enabled them to continue. Also, he stuck to the themes and settings he knew, and held hard to his belief that

> the beginner should write about people at work. Human beings *may* be interesting when they are indulging in the charming delights of love or the brutal satisfactions of lust, but they are *certain* to be interesting when they are at work.

He insisted on writing of Wessex as it was in his own day, its rustic speech corrupted by Americanisms, and its farmers, no longer baptised with the names of minor prophets, seeking their relaxation in Bournemouth rather than the harvest-supper or oak-tree bed.

This is not an outstanding book. It has interesting points and amusing anecdotes, but its interest is personal rather than intrinsic. The last chapters are best, when war comes and Mr. Street, having always pleaded for peacetime grass to store fertility for wartime crops, beats

his own pen back into a ploughshare and—after long priding himself on his isolation—makes this vow:

> —when the war is over, should any one, king, politician, or the town voter, make any attempt to sacrifice Britain's countryside on the altar of town interests in the same fashion as it was sacrificed after 1918, I will fight him even if the fight leads me into the mire of politics.

Let us hope he will find a party worth supporting.

GEOFFREY TREASE

OPEN LETTERS

My Dear Churchill. By "POPULUS." *Gollancz.* 2s. 6d.

Last summer's catastrophe in the West meant that this country was confronted with a new strategic and tactical position of appalling danger; it also meant one of the greatest chances in Britain's history for the enlightened and progressive sections of the population. Chamberlainism and the Tory majority were discredited as no political party and point of view have ever been discredited. They had been proved deficient in thought, slothful in administration and complacent in words. They were finished. Had there been any possibility of ascertaining the verdict of the country, few if any of the discomfited sheep of Captain Margesson would have been permitted by the electorate to retain the seats of influence they had obtained in 1935. Since then the country has been through an immense ordeal: it still faces worse ordeals. Mr. Churchill has done what no other man could have done in keeping the country together. He is immersed in the military conduct of the war. But on the economic side our organisation has been lamentably slow, and the high hopes of utilising this period to organise a better as well as a different England have not been fulfilled.

The Prime Minister, as "Populus" puts it in his remarkable series of letters to Ministers, declared, at the time when he was forming his Government, that henceforward the economic side of the war would be mainly the business of his Labour colleagues. Why, then, has there been such slow progress on the home front? Much of the blame must be put on the shoulders of the Labour Ministers. Attlee and Greenwood were the members of the War Cabinet charged in May, 1940, with co-ordinating policies in the economic sphere. Morrison and Bevin were put into the two key economic departments. Chamberlain as the Head of the "Steering Committee" and Sir Kingsley Wood at the Treasury could not have resisted a thorough reform on the economic front. But as "Populus" says to Attlee: "Beyond exhorting the rest of us to 'Go to it,' you and your Labour colleagues have so far done singularly little to get the nation better organised for war; the war on its economic side is still being conducted pretty much as it was under Chamberlain." Concessions to Labour there were—in wages, means test, etc. They came slowly, much too slowly, and even now the war effort is hampered by wages in the war sector being too low in comparison with "unessential" industries which can gaily charge increased costs on to the consumer.

I should go farther as an economist than "Populus" goes as a member of the Socialist Party. Trade Union leaders and Labour Ministers, fascinated by their new status and responsibilities, never considered their duties in a sufficiently detached way. They tried to safeguard the interests of those whom they are supposed to represent in a defensive manner instead of insisting on an all-round control in which they take their share. They tried to maintain sectional collective bargaining instead of insisting on controlling and planning. They never realised their unique opportunity.

Step by step their influence waned. Morrison was moved and Greenwood removed. Instead of having one Minister with an adequate staff and adequate powers to pull the war effort together, we have a yet greater multiplicity of committees. As we have not planned to cut consumption when there was time to accumulate stocks and train people "freed" for their new jobs in the war sector, periodic crises arise in production which must be solved in a hurry. There is no time now for planning or insisting on safeguards or institutional reorganisation. Hence patchwork remedies of a sectional character are adopted as an instrument of State policy. Much more far-reaching compulsion on individuals must be instituted than should have been necessary. There is an inevitable drift towards a non-equalitarian and ultimately corporative or even Fascist solution of the war economic problem, a problem whose *efficient* solution would have given such power to the Progressive Parties. With it we see a revival of the Tory Party, of grievances and frictions which we thought were buried on the beaches of Dunkirk. And at the same time this process also implies a sacrifice of the technically most rational solution to a *modus vivendi* for the various (and not exclusively propertied) vested interests. The very possibility of a rational reconstruction is prejudiced and compromised.

All these problems are treated with a penetrating skill in this book. It is, to my mind, the best small volume on the Principles of War Economics that has been published since the outbreak of hostilities. It is to be hoped that it will be as widely read and digested as it deserves.

T. BALOGH

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY SIAM

Adventurers in Siam in the Seventeenth Century. By E. W. HUTCHINSON. *Royal Asiatic Society.* 12s. 6d.

The author of this book, long resident in Chiengmai, in Northern Siam, has published a collection of documents of absorbing human interest, relating to the contacts between Siam and Europe in the seventeenth century. His immediate incentive to publication seems to have been the challenge in Mr. Collis's preface to *Siamese White* for a detailed elucidation of the character and policy of that strange intriguer and man of genius, the Greek Constant Phaulkon, who between 1682 and 1688 practically directed Siam's foreign policy. Mr. Hutchinson has collected many new documents concerning the rise and fall of that intelligent adventurer who, from cabin-boy on an English boat, rose to be minister at the court of Siam's most enlightened king; who made Japanese and Dutch, East India Company and "interlopers," French Monsigneurs and Roman Jesuits, even Louis XIV himself, dance to a Siamese tune, and the ruins of whose palace alone survive when many royal ones have long since come to dust. These documents are quite as fascinating as the author of *Siamese White* anticipated. But Mr. Hutchinson is a collector and not a dramatist, and the reader would do well to take his advice and re-read *Siamese White* in conjunction with this book. He will appreciate with what exact imagination Mr. Collis has unravelled the tangled skein of events. Certain important documents unearthed by Mr. Hutchinson were unknown to him; but his portrait of Constant Phaulkon, though only a foil to his hero Samuel White, has the super-reality of one of those prodigious Italian courtiers grouped behind their prince in a Renaissance picture. Mr. Hutchinson quotes some very revealing letters from Phaulkon, but omits the crushing reply to his discarded protégé Samuel White: "It will be no small pleasure to find you as innocent as you pretend, nor shall we ever take delight to ruin what our hands have built up; but if we per-

LABOUR MONTHLY

April

THE CRISIS OF THE LEFT

"R.P.D." studies the problem of developing a powerful democratic opposition to the Tory Coalition Government and the big business anti-democratic interests it represents in circumstances where the mass democratic organisations have been disarmed by their own leaders. In its examination of the elements hostile to democratic unity, the article includes a massive exposure of a recent publication, *The Betrayal of the Left.*

THE AMERICAN SCENE

by Ivor Montagu examines, with copious and devastating quotation, the war mobilisation of the United States Empire and the actual policy of Washington, epitomised in the remark of Wendell Willkie that "*After the war the capital of the world will be Berlin or Washington. I want it to be Washington.*"

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N.B. This issue includes the Prospectus of R. Palme Dutt's new 640-page, 8s. 6d. book, *Crisis of the British People*, offered to regular readers at the sensational price of 3s. 6d. in celebration of *Labour Monthly's* Twentieth Birthday.

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ACT LIKE MAGIC

ceive a structure of our own raising begin to totter and threaten our own ruin with its fall, none can tax us with imprudence if we take it down in time."

The reign of Phra Narai coincides with the re-birth of Siam after a long and disastrous offensive against Burma. She was in a position to dispense favours, and was courted by rival Muslim kingdoms and Christian kings, as well as capitalist companies and free traders. The story is full of dramatic clashes and curious intrigues. Distinguished and saintly personalities are jostled by unscrupulous, shady and brutal ones. "The captain carried himself during the voyage with such a scornful high of pride that the Devil himself could no more, and made us stink in the nostrils of all nations." The various phases of Siam's early contacts with Europe end with the execution of Phaulkon and the triumph of nationalist reaction, when the conversion of Siam was revealed as the price of an alliance with France. Mr. Hutchinson shows how this growing isolationist and anti-foreign policy led finally to the razing of Ayudhya by the Burmese in 1767. That humiliation still rankles, and now that Burma is British and Japan uppermost in Siam, may again rear its head.

BERYL DE ZOETE

Offensive Against Germany. By SEBASTIAN HAFFNER. Searchlight Books, No. 2. *Secker and Warburg.* 2*s.*

Help Us Germans to Beat the Nazis. By HEINRICH FRAENKEL. *Gollancz.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

The problem of making constructive use of the refugee Germans in this country is one which is likely to become more pressing at a later stage in the war. Its solution is bound up with the question of the official policy on propaganda to the German people. If that policy is largely determined by the view that no distinction can or ought to be made between Nazis and non-Nazis, leaders and led, and by the view that they are all, without distinction, incurably vicious, then there is nothing our propaganda can aim at but terror and fear. If we indict the whole nation, we are debarred from appealing to them to revolt against their leaders.

One consequence of this attitude. We find well-known anti-Nazi Germans in this country agreeing that too little use is made of the services of German refugees in appealing to the Opposition in Germany, of whose existence they are confident. Writers like Haffner and Fraenkel wish above all for the recognition in this country of a body of "Free Germans," and insist they should be given a legal status and to be enlisted as full members in the Allied cause.

Mr. Fraenkel's book raises this problem clearly enough, but his actual proposals are based on a sound knowledge of what has actually been done. The book is written with facility, indeed, with dogmatism, but it lacks practical grasp of the realities. It is not surprising if persons whom we have ourselves shut off from the world of practice in internment camps are ill-informed. Mr. Haffner, whose appointment as editor of *Die Zeitung* seemed to some extent an answer to the charge that refugees are not adequately used for propaganda, has more to say; his book is not very profound, but it is vigorous and suggestive. Possibly the conventional and unimaginative quality of *Die Zeitung* is the fault rather of officialdom than of the editor. Mr. Haffner's remarks about building gigantic wireless stations to strengthen us in the radio war against Hitler shows considerable ignorance of the actualities of propaganda. *Offensive Against Germany* repeats in short form some of the very valuable material already published in his *Germany, Jekyll and Hyde.* In particular he elaborates his interesting thesis that the dangerous British myth that we can afford to lose the early battles because we always win the last is paralleled by a similarly dangerous German myth that the conquering Siegfried must at some time fail spectacularly and that his failure will involve Germany in the *Gotterdämerung.*

The Future of International Government. By E. H. CARR and S. MADARIAGA. 4*d.* **The Economic Revolution.** By H. J. LASKI, and Others. 6*d.* **The Spiritual Basis of Peace.** By H. G. WOOD, and Others. 6*d.* *National Peace Council.*

There are certain things the National Peace Council can usefully do in war time. It can direct people's attention to the nature of the peace settlement that will end the war, and of the world that will succeed it. Those who are actively engaged in the war effort are like men working in a deep sunk pit who cannot spare time and energy to climb out and take a look round. But it is obviously a good thing that some of us should be engaged both in looking round and looking ahead, irrespective of what is happening in the pit. Secondly, it can keep in front of people's minds certain principles: the principle, for example, that love is better than hate, that in so far as the settlement after the war springs out of hate it will be a bad settlement, in so far as it is inspired by love a good one, and that, even when anger and hate are appropriate, they should not be indiscriminate anger, unmitigated hate. The application of this principle entails a non-vindictive attitude to the peace and a non-Vansittart attitude to the Germans.

Thirdly, it is important that we should be warned against the fallacy which sees the war as one thing, the peace as another, insists that we must win the war before we permit ourselves to think about the peace, and assumes that what is done in the winning of the war can be done without reference to its effects upon the peace. The fact of the matter is, of course, that we are in a developing situation, which is also a revolutionary situation, and war and peace, instead of being two juxtaposed but separate chunks of time, are independent and overlapping phases of the one situation.

For all these reasons the continued activities of the National Peace Council are to be welcomed. Particularly valuable were the series of Conferences on Peace Aims which it organised during the winter. The most fruitful of these conferences was the one held at Oxford in January, and three pamphlets have just been published, containing some of the more important addresses which were delivered at the Conference. *The Future of International Government* includes speeches by Professor Carr and Senor Madariaga, *The Economic Revolution* is composed of the contributions of Professor H. J. Laski, Wilfrid Wellock and P. W. Martin, while *The Spiritual Basis of Peace* contains the views of H. G. Wood, Ritchie Calder, and Professor Norman Bentwich. They all illustrate in different ways the principles which, we have suggested, are important at the present time. That they appear at all is the result of the energy and determination of the Secretary of the Council, Gerald Bailey.

The Living Thoughts of Emerson. Presented by EDGAR LEE MASTERS. *Cassell.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

Emerson is one of those writers who have more power to stir than to sustain the enthusiasm of most readers. The first page sparkles with thought and emotion, by the fifth the thought is wearing thin and the emotion has gone flat. Such at least has usually been his effect on English readers. Americans, if one may judge from Edgar Lee Masters, are differently affected. Mr. Masters's introduction to this volume is a delightful piece of writing, semi-autobiographical and therefore very illuminating about the influence of Emerson on the minds of sensitive and intelligent Americans. In a new country, full of energy and action, the mild voice of Emerson indicating the existence of eternal values must have been refreshing and renovating to many youthful souls. There is real beauty in such a sentence as "It is only the finite that has wrought and suffered; the infinite lies stretched in smiling repose." His defect is too bland a detachment from passionate feeling. "The love of the sexes is initial"—that expresses what Plato also expressed, but what Plato learned by experience Emerson seems to observe from a great distance.

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

MR. DESMOND MACCARTHY once pointed out that writers who, instead of launching out on experiments or developing "second and third manners," simply go on varying a single theme in a series of closely similar works, are after a point spoken of as having "written themselves out long ago," whereas the discerning eye will discover that their latest books are in fact the best written, the best observed, the most economical, in short, their best. Miss Compton Burnett is a case in point; so, arguably, was Mere-

dith; so, certainly, was Stendhal. The same rather subtle rule applies to composers—though not, of course, to all who have pursued this course: few people would deny that Strauss started to deteriorate after *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1918), and it would be a bold paradox to contend that *Friedenstag* was superior to *Elektra*, or that *Arabella* was the equal of *Der Rosenkavalier*. But Rachmaninoff can, I think, sustain the charge, and although the bulk of critics are against me in this, I shall hazard the suggestion that the *Third Symphony* is, with the possible exception of *The Bells*, this composer's finest, as it is his latest, large-scale work. It has conspicuous faults, of which over-writing is the most prevalent. The orchestration, though carried through with fascinating skill, is distractingly elaborate; the first movement suffers from an hysterical over-emphasis and a theatrical indulgence in gesture that are among the less happy features of Tchaikovsky's symphonic legacy; the transition and development passages are stereotyped (one of Rachmaninoff's besetting sins, this) and disagreeably "literary"; the Finale helps itself out with a fugue—a by now discredited method and a sign of weakening inspiration. Nevertheless, the virtues of the work as a whole greatly outweigh these disadvantages. This luxuriously coloured, melancholy, orchidaceous music expresses in the most poignant fashion the terrible nostalgia of exile: Rachmaninoff's soul has clearly never left the Russia from which he was virtually banished more than twenty years ago. The last bars of the first movement have, therefore, a most convincing and "inevitable" gravity, but it is in the succeeding movement—the Adagio-cum-Scherzo—that the composer has had what seems to me the finest inspiration of his career. The movement solves perfectly, and most dramatically, the difficult problem of balance posed by the four-movement convention and makes possible, as well as vastly more effective, the sudden outburst of the original theme on the full orchestra—a moment of splendid beauty (side 6) that sends a thrill down the spine. This symphony, then, marks an advance, and not merely in technical ability, on its distant predecessor; the emotions expressed by both are roughly the same: we are in a semi-oriental world of passive suffering, shot with erotic visions and moments of strange exaltation. The performance, by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Rachmaninoff himself (H.M.V.), is perfectly assured and distinguished by some lovely fragments of solo playing. The recording, though on the fierce side, is much less harsh than American issues of this kind of work are apt to be.

The Dream Music and Ballet Music from Handel's *Alcina* are two agreeable suites culled and arranged by D. Whittaker from an opera written in 1735. They are characteristic without being particularly striking, and are definitely inferior to the *Pastor Fido Suite* of last month. The recording, by Weingartner and the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra (Col.) is up to standard.

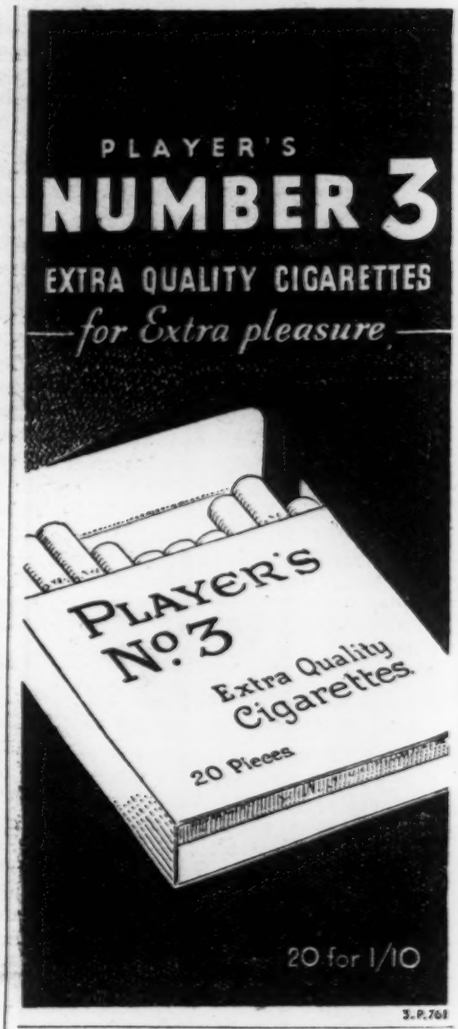
The Gramophone Company really deserves the very highest praise for its enterprise in bringing out, in these straitened days, two chamber music works of the first water, one exceedingly difficult, the other quite easy. The first is Bartok's *Second String Quartet in A minor*. This enigmatic masterpiece (much more wholly successful, by the way, than No. 1) was written during the last war and must be reckoned, with Bartok's later quartets and the Piano Quintet of Ernest Bloch, among the greatest achievements of the century in its kind. In it the perfection of string quartet writing is allied to an uncompromising resolve to arrive at immediate communication of passionate and complex feeling—immediate because Bartok follows Beethoven in never yielding to the demand for musical good manners. This is, therefore, not "nice" music; on the other hand it is without the emotional desiccation and the tiresome "objective" pretensions of the neo-classical school. The idiom, which derives from the late Beethoven through Debussy (a curious path!), is perfectly logical and however odd the harmony may sound at first hearing, it is never atonal: throughout all the kaleidoscopic progressions, the sense of key is never lost. The quartet is in three movements—Moderato, Allegro, Lento—on the whole the most satisfying sonata-scheme. The extraordinary pulsating Scherzo beats Honegger's *Pacific 231* on its own ground, and its muted rushing can still be heard as a sort of background to the slow, violent arabesques of the final Lento which, though unquestionably the most difficult, is also the most profound movement of the three. I can, perhaps, best give an idea of its sinister beauty by asking the reader to imagine that he has ascended to the stratosphere in a balloon and there, enclosed in the intense deep violet of space, is watching the magical rite of stars and planets, waxing and waning in their elliptical pursuit of each other, one clashing blindly with a burnt-out star and flying into white-hot fragments which plunge away to form some new constellation and leave the vast dark cone of space bare to the fascinated eye, until another glittering system comes swinging, like some huge and complicated toy, across the saturated blue of perpetual night.

But all that is absurdly literary and personal, you will say; and indeed I should prefer everyone to "see" this wonderful movement for himself; my only object in giving my own impression being to urge on the reader the extraordinary and lasting poetry of the music. The performance, by the Budapest String Quartet (H.M.V.), is completely authoritative, fine and strong in tone and effortless in technical mastery of the most trying passages. The set as a whole can only be described as a triumph for English recording.

The second chamber music work, to which I referred as "quite easy," is Mozart's *Trio in E flat (K 498)*, for clarinet, viola and piano. Compared with the Bartok it is, in fact, easy to follow, but is none the less a very rich and mature work, full of the loveliest tunes and ending with one of the finest rondos Mozart ever composed. The Minuet is very fully developed and has the effect of a Scherzo. The performance, by Reginald Kell, Frederick Riddle and Louis Kentner (Col.), is very smooth and rich in tone and remarkably well recorded. The piano part might with advantage have been more flexible in rhythm; otherwise this set calls for nothing but praise, and considering its low price one hopes that record-buyers will encourage H.M.V. to employ this ensemble again. By substituting a cellist for Mr. Riddle, they might give us Brahms' fine *Clarinet Trio, op. 114*, which has been neglected since 1924.

In every way the equal of the last-mentioned set, both in performance and recording, the new Decca issue of Mendelssohn's *Trio in C minor, op. 66*, will supply a felt need. For this Trio is representative of Mendelssohn in his most virile and generous mood. The themes are memorably lovely and the writing uniformly superb. Unlike so many of this composer's slow movements, the Andante has nothing of the "Voluntary" about it, and William Murdoch states its theme with great sensitiveness and discretion. He and Albert Sammons and Cedric Sharpe have that admirable balance which results from years of team-work. I wish they would take to themselves a viola-player and give us Fauré's ravishing *Quartet in G minor*, the piano part in which I once heard Mr. Murdoch deliver perfectly.

Ravel's *Jeux d'Eau* is a most un-gramophonic piece, but its delicate imagery is brilliantly rendered by Eileen Joyce and most skilfully



J. P. 761

The Family Physician

THE PAIN SIMPLY VANISHED

That's what many of my patients say to me, after taking the Phensic tablets I have prescribed for them.

Nervous headache—backache—neuritis—neuralgia—rheumatic pains—they say Phensic seems to go right to the root of the pain and soothe it away.

This power of Phensic to "make the pain go" so quickly is partly explained by the rapidity with which Phensic is absorbed into the blood and partly because four ingredients, not just one, make up the Phensic formula.

These four ingredients work together to attain the desired results—and every one of them works better for working with the other three. Yes! It is a medical triumph. No one would deny it.

A celebrated surgeon, concerned with relieving pain and weakness after operations, says he is profoundly convinced of the pain-killing, fever-reducing qualities of Phensic.

However delicate you may be, Phensic will do you no harm. It does not harm the heart. It does not upset the stomach. It does not leave the patient depressed.

Two tablets will bring you soothing comfort from jangled nerves. They will refresh and hearten you when you feel over-tired. Every chemist has Phensic brand. It will cost you 7d., 1/5, 3/5 & 5/8 (*Inc. Purchase Tax*).

recorded (Parl.). It is unfortunate that she should have chosen for the obverse Chopin's *Etude in E, op. 10, No. 3*, the subtle simplicity of which Miss Joyce has evidently misunderstood, for her *rubato* is intolerably exaggerated throughout.

Albeniz's *Tango* and *Malaguena* (H.M.V.) are rather small potatoes for Kreisler to put before us; but it does not do to be ungrateful nowadays, and anyway the Tango is a very pretty piece of teatime music. Kreisler outlines the luscious melody in his most below-the-belt manner.

If the gramophone companies intend, not merely to import American issues, but to go on making records over here in spite of the difficulties, and in that case surely all music-lovers in the country would support them to limit of their powers—I would urge the claims of two major works, one of which has never been recorded, the other not for some twenty years: Vaughan Williams' *Pastoral Symphony* and Elgar's *Cello Concerto*. Both these works stand high in the history of modern music and are certainly easier to assimilate than a Bartok quartet.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

Week-end Competitions

No. 585

Set by G. W. Stonier

Mr. A. P. Herbert's verse postscript of last Sunday might be followed by invitations to poets to broadcast on the situation. The usual prizes are offered for the best extract from a poem (limit 24 lines) that might be written in the circumstances by one of the following: T. S. Eliot, John Betjeman, John Masefield, Patience Strong, Dylan Thomas, Robert W. Service, Cole Porter, or Stephen Spender.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, April 28th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 582

Set by Doll Tearsheet

The *Times* refused to publish a letter from Mr. T. S. Eliot, correcting their oddly inadequate obituary upon James Joyce, which incidentally complained that Joyce failed to appreciate either the higher sides of human character or the serene beauty of nature. A first prize of two guineas and the second of half a guinea are offered for the best obituary notice, in a similar vein (limit 250 words), on Ben Jonson, Wycherley, Swift, Smollett, Byron, Zola, Ibsen or Proust.

Report by Doll Tearsheet

I should like to set a competition for a sonnet beginning "Arnold, thou should'st be living at this hour," for nobody has ever teased the *Times* about its philistinism so effectively as Arnold. The *Literary Supplement* has now joined in the jolly old English sport of hunting the highbrow, with a leading article on "pithecism." Pithecism, it appears, is the opposite of humanism, and denotes the attitude of those writers who are particularly aware of wickedness, and notably of those writers for whose obituaries I asked. I might have added the names of all the Hebrew Prophets and almost all the great Christian writers from St. Paul and St. Augustine to Calvin and Pascal. It was, of course, to Joyce's Jesuit education that he owed that conviction of man's essential vileness which the *Times* considers so regrettable. The disciple of Montaigne or Diderot will naturally consider Joyce's view of life morbid and jaundiced, but such a complaint comes oddly from a journal that professes to be Christian. For pithecism at its richest I recommend Tertullian, St. Paulinus and St. Jerome. The competitors reached an even level, which makes it difficult to select the winners. I like the way H. T. S. begins:

> Mr. William Wycherley, the distinguished dramatist, died in London yesterday at the age of 75. He is survived by a widow. His first wife, formerly the Countess of Drogheda, died in 1681.

G. J. Blundell is good on Zola:

> By the death of Emile Zola at the age of sixty-two, Europe has lost one of its most industrious, if not one of its most brilliant novelists. . . . Future ages will probably look upon him rather as the champion of the unfortunate Dreyfus than as a writer whose work bears the stamp of immortality.

(I wonder if Mr. Blundell has just copied this from the *Times* of 1902?) J. B. C. Date also hits off a characteristic in his Zola: "His works are exceedingly striking, and have attained a certain success in some Continental circles, but they are unlikely to appeal to English readers . . ." Walter W. Baldwin is exact in his Swift:

> Swift's effusions will never live with the stamp of greatness upon them, for the pictures he drew are warped; his subjects are fantastic or grotesque. We find in his writings little that will benefit or lastingly please mankind.

R. S. Jaffray is topical in his Byron:

> He might have been as it were a Laureate to the Holy Alliance and praised in fitting terms the Emperors and European Aristocracy now happily restored. But he died in squalor essaying to lead a band of tattered malcontents, whose success would be only the prelude to fresh assaults upon the dignity and privileges of the respectable classes everywhere.

I recommend that the first prize be given to John Mair and the second to Allan M. Laing, each of whom has successfully borrowed thunder.

FIRST PRIZE

DR. SWIFT

"The Gloomy Dean"

From a Correspondent.

The Dean of St. Patrick's, whose death was announced yesterday, was recognised by all who knew him as a man of unusual talents. Although, in youth, he flirted with the Left, maturity brought better judgment, and his *Conduct of the Allies* and other political pamphlets gave high promise of a distinguished future; while his attack on Mr. Wood's scheme for Irish Currency Reform, though intemperate in tone, won the approbation of several serious economists.

By his younger contemporaries, however, Dr. Swift was regarded chiefly for his imaginative writings. He did, undoubtedly, possess an effective turn of phrase, and could, when he disciplined his pen, produce charming fantasies provocative of no other emotion than an innocent and appreciative merriment. Unhappily, however, his work in Ireland and the burden of his clerical responsibilities led him to take an increasingly unworthy view of human nature, and most of his writing is irremediably marred (save, no doubt, in the eyes of a small section of the Dublin intelligentsia) by a needless realism that too often sinks to studied and deliberate coarseness. It cannot be doubted that his attitude to his fellow men was cynical and degrading to a high degree, for it was his misfortune never to realise the truth, so ably demonstrated by Mr. Cibber, that genius is infinite good taste. It is this failing that has robbed his work of the merit it might otherwise have possessed, and reduced so much of it to an empty and ephemeral sensationalism.

JOHN MAIR

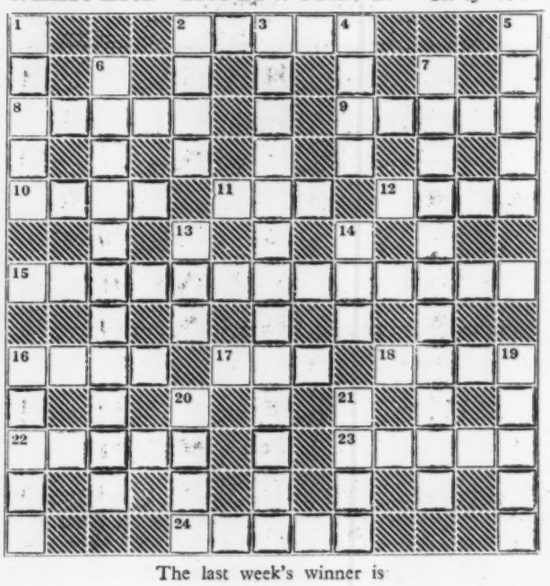
SECOND PRIZE

By Dr. Swift's death the world loses a polemicist rather than a priest; a partisan who threw scruples to the wind as he fought for his side; a writer whose somewhat heated imagination was, alas, curiously circumscribed by a habit of splenetic bitterness; and a man who, though he loved his friends, seldom missed an opportunity of showing his contempt for the rest of mankind. He enjoyed some reputation in his own circle as a wit, but as the published examples were almost invariably malicious, he failed of the approval of that wider world which looks on life with no jaundiced eye and finds it, on the whole, good.

Dr. Swift was characteristically unable to appreciate the immense advances made by civilisation, and this, combined with an unhappy gift for satire, turned everything he wrote to dust and ashes. Possibly a small corner in the literary Pantheon is reserved for him, but for ourselves, we cannot see posterity taking to its bosom and cherishing one who took such obvious pleasure in detesting "that animal called man." It is a pity, for, with a small admixture of the milk of human kindness, Dr. Swift might have become the genial Hans Andersen of the age, and his best-known work, *Gulliver's Travels*, instead of a drearily savage fable on mankind, could have been a charming children's fairy tale.

ALLAN M. LAING

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 28 *Set by* V. S.



The last week's winner is

S. Hughes, 19 Molesham Way, West Molesey, Surrey.

ACROSS

2. Adds 13 for honours from nearly 13 packs. (5)
8. Breaks in school-days, so to speak? (5)
9. Draws the line at Warwick's sobriquet. (5)
10 & 5. See the old bird smile, being carried away by a swan. (9)
11 & 14. A homely substitute for *Fine Champagne*, after all? (6)
12. John Ireland's transposition of "North Sea." (4)
15. A match for Jack - of - all trades. (4, 2, 3 & 4)
16. The mantle might have fitted a giant to a T. (4)
17. See 13.
18. Apparently a spanner was used to deliver the knock-out blow. (4)
22. The girl who was taken ill on the way back. (5)
23. Just a little extra for a letter? (5)
24. Spoil-sport. (5)

DOWN

1. Up and down, even from side to side. (5)
2. National emblem for capsized craft. (4)
3. For example, not one of the *Rites of the Church!* (13)
4. May be running in one direction or another. (4)
5. See 10.
6. Get the bird for a blow in the black-out. (11)
7. Flies to take poison. (4 hyphen 7)
13 and 17. A drop of liquor made a different being of her. (6)
14. See 11.
16. Trade Union up the pole. (5)
19. Returned Yea for Nay In a Curious Way. (5)
20. Over 21. (4)
21. Hands up! (4)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

A	C	T	I	V	A	T	E	■	S	O	N	S
C	■	■	I	■	H	■	V	■	L	■	T	
M	■	B	A	D	G	E	R	I	N	G	■	A
E	■	■	O	■	M	■	R	■	A	■	R	
■	■	C	A	R	O	U	S	A	L	■	■	T
H	■	A	■	■	S	■	G	■	S	■	U	
A	P	P	L	E	P	I	E	O	R	D	E	R
N	■	E	■	N	■	C	■	■	O	■	N	
D	■	■	G	I	G	A	N	T	I	C	■	■
C	■	O	■	S	■	L	■	H	■	■	O	
A	■	T	H	R	O	B	B	I	N	G	■	N
R	■	I	■	U	■	O	■	N	■	■	U	
T	A	S	K	■	E	X	C	E	S	S	E	S

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By URBANUS

THE NATIONAL INCOME—LESS FOR DIVIDENDS—OVER-VALUED STORES—UTILITIES

THE admirable White Paper published with the Budget, described as "An Analysis of the Sources of War Finance and an Estimate of the National Income and Expenditure in 1938 and 1940," should be read by every investor. Incidentally, it marks the reform of the Treasury from outside. I am not one to cast stones at the Civil Service, but it must be confessed that the old Treasury was not conspicuous for initiation or enterprise or imagination. The eminent economists who now swell the ranks of the Treasury's advisers are no doubt responsible for this remarkable war-time production. I wish that Mr. J. M. Keynes had been allowed to write a popular exposé of the paper in a prefatory note. As it stands it is too technical for the average business man or taxpayer. Nevertheless for the investor its message is plain. Of the rapidly rising national income an increasing share is being taken by wages and salaries (even after allowing payments to workers in the armed forces) and a declining share by profits and interest (even before deduction of National Defence Contributions and Excess Profits Tax). There is nothing socially wrong in this distribution. If the numbers receiving wages were set against the numbers receiving profits and dividends, it would be seen as an overdue social reform. But the holder of Equity shares should realise that as the war goes on his dividends, on the whole, are likely to decline. The only consolation will be that the break-up value of the revenue-producing assets will be enhanced by expenditures which dodge the Excess Profits Tax. Here are the official figures of the trend of the national income :—

	In £ millions.					
	1938	1940	1940			
			1st Qr.	2nd Qr.	3rd Qr.	4th Qr.
Rents	352	370	92	93	93	92
Profits and Interest ...	1,178	1,514	347	387	394	386
Salaries ...	980	1,135	264	276	295	300
Wages ...	1,820	2,483	562	622	647	652
Net National Income* ...	4,415	5,586	1,286	1,399	1,450	1,451

*Including other income and before deduction of direct taxes.

It will be seen that between 1938 and 1940 the wages bill rose by over 36 per cent. and profits and interest by less than 22 per cent. It should be added that salaries, which also eat into profits, will probably rise more rapidly now that E.P.T. is 100 per cent. When the national cake is getting bigger the first to help themselves to a larger slice are the managing directors and business executives. Nevertheless, as the Government dare not set a limit to the rise in wages, the slice taken by the workers is bound to go on increasing.

* * *

Not only will net profits and dividends decline as the war goes on, but the loss will fall chiefly on the domestic trades catering for civilian wants other than food and drink and tobacco which are now restricted by Government Order. After the initial decline in profits resulting from the switch-over to munitions, the capital goods' industries will tend to stabilise their earnings on the steady outflow of Government orders. But the domestic consumption trades will now experience what the capital goods did at the beginning of the war—a contraction in earnings until the position is stabilised on a much lower level of consumption with concentration of reduced output. I promised to give some examples of what I considered to be "consumption" equities over-valued by comparison with "capital goods" equities. Here are the former drawn from the store group :—

	Price	Div. % 1940	Yield %
Woolworth, 5/-	46/3	65.0	7.0
Harrods, £1	26/3	4.0	3.0
John Barker, £1	30/-	10.0	6.6

The relatively high yield in Woolworth is explained by the fact that it has not yet reduced its dividend in this war. Barkers paid 15 per cent. in 1938, but maintained the 1939 dividend in 1940. Harrods have come down from 16 per cent. in 1938. By comparison the following capital goods shares seem cheaper :—

	Price	Div. % 1940	Yield %
United Steel, £1	21/-	8.0	7.6
Fisher & Ludlow, 10/- ...	17/-	12.5	7.4
Hadfields, 10/-	21/3	22.5	10.5

United Steel have brought their dividend down from 10 per cent. to 8 per cent. and Fisher and Ludlow from 20 per cent. to 12½ per cent. The post-war reconstruction should benefit both companies, particularly United Steel in building and Fisher and Ludlow in the motor car revival. Hadfields have maintained their dividend and should be kept busy for years by the shipbuilders.

* * *

The time will soon come when investors will begin to pick up the depressed utility shares. The war may be long, but it is no use waiting until you think everyone has sold. The London Utilities have already had sharp falls following upon their dividend cuts :—

	Present Price	High 1938	Div. % 1940
Gas Light & Coke, £1 ...	11/-	25/9	2½% int. (no final)
London Associated Electric, £1	13/9	32/9	—
County of London, £1	30/6	51/9	8%

It will be observed that some of the stocks will have to be held without anticipation of income for the rest of the war, but that is not an important factor with income tax at 10s. in the £.

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